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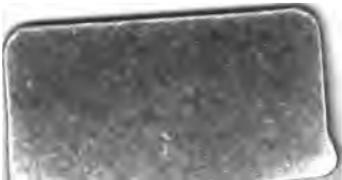
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THE  
VILLAGE PEARL  
A POEM BY  
JOHN CRAWFORD WILSON.



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THE  
VILLAGE PEARL:

A Domestic Poem.

WITH MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

BY

JOHN CRAWFORD WILSON.

---

ANGELO. Nay, women are frail too.  
ISABEL. Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves,  
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.  
Women! Help, Heaven! Men their creations mar  
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;  
For we are soft as our complexions are,  
And credulous to false prints.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

---

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TO

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD,

ETC. ETC.

THIS VOLUME

IS, WITH HIS PERMISSION,

*Most respectfully Inscribed,*

AS A SLIGHT TRIBUTE

TO THE BRIGHT GENIUS AND STERLING WORTH,

WHICH, WHILE ORNAMENTING THE

BENCH,

HAVE ADDED A GREAT AND GLORIOUS LUSTRE TO THE  
LITERATURE OF HIS

AGE,

BY HIS FERVENT ADMIRER,

AND OBLIGED OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *August*, 1852.

2

*Polonius.* My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

*Hamlet.* Odds bodikin, man ! much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and dignity. *The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.*

*Hamlet.*

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## THE VILLAGE PEARL.

---

### Book the first.

How sweet the task, when day is almost done—  
A summer's day—to view the setting sun ;  
To rest on some green hillock and survey  
The magic splendours of his cloudless way.  
With dazzling disk of molten gold, he lies  
Pendant in space—sole monarch of the skies.  
There slowly sinking, bright the hues he spreads  
Around the western mountains' rugged heads,  
Bathing their summits in such heav'nly glare  
That angel feet might tread unsullied there.  
The gilded tree tops glitter in his beams,  
And simple currents change to silvery streams.  
Shadow, his sable servant, bears his train,  
Leaving dark blots on the indented plain ;  
Behind each substance, on the eastern side,—  
By light unseen—his noiseless footsteps glide,

Hiding with spectral hand, and hoodwinked eye  
One half creation 'neath a canopy,  
Which darkens twilight as soft zephyrs stir  
Her veil of thin transparent gossamer ;  
Then as he sinks, beneath the western height  
Smiling at eve, and bidding earth "Good night,"  
Ere yet the beams, that tinge with lurid red  
The gorgeous curtains which surround his bed,  
Have in the distance faded from the scene  
The evening Star, leads forth Night's sceptred queen ;  
High poised in air, upon her ebon throne  
She mildly claims, our hemisphere, her own,  
Her chief insignia, one pearly gem  
Centred amid her starry diadem.

How hush'd is Nature, how profoundly still,  
The sole insurgent is yon rippling rill,  
That bound by straggling banks on either hand,  
Wages a warfare on the pebbly strand :  
With bubbles crested, and low plaintive cry,  
Its pigmy billows roll unceasing by,  
Distorting Nature's beauties, rich and rare,  
As shattered mirrors might reflect the Fair.

:

Onward it flows, and in its course it blends  
With streams, the tributes that each valley sends.  
Still gathering weight, and dignity and power,  
And calmer grown with each successive hour,  
'Till deeper waters bid its murmurings cease,  
And petty discord yields to perfect peace.  
E'en such is Life, upon Time's eddying stream,  
Yet not a bubble, nor a fabled dream :  
Life is Reality, and wends its way  
As doth the stream, upon an April's day ;  
A changeful day—a day of smiles and tears,  
Of joys and sorrows, hopes, and trembling fears.  
Such compounds strange are to man's being given,  
His earthen mould lit up with fire from heaven.  
And what is Time? a fragment rent from space—  
A speck in chaos Mind was formed to grace ;  
A rich oasis fixed by Heaven's decree  
Amid the deserts of eternity.

In inexperienced youth, the restless soul  
Chafes at its lot, and rashly spurns control ;  
Frets like the streamlet on its pebbly bed,  
Whilst wild Ambition's bubbles burst o'erhead.—

So thoughtless all, that its distempered eye  
Sees fact in fiction, dwells in ecstasy,  
And classes sages of earth's stateliest schools  
Amongst the senile ranks of babbling fools.—  
Onward it speeds,—but as it older grows  
It learns that friends are scarcer far than foes;  
Subdues the haughty spirit, that in youth  
Was led by passions, fiery and uncouth,  
To careless acts, that in its manlier prime  
Would wait on Judgment, and lend thought to Time.  
Still on it flows, till every ardent trace  
Of youth's hot follies leaves its placid face,  
And as the river mingles with the sea,  
It calmly glides into Eternity.

Oh! fittest hour for melancholy lay,  
When worldly thoughts lie sepultured with day.  
When holy solitude, with soothing balm,  
Sheds o'er the soul its pure transcendent calm,  
When heaven's bright twinkling stars revolve on  
high,  
Like diamond lamps hung from the ebon sky,  
And gentle zephyrs o'er the valleys creep,  
Lulling the flocks and herds to peaceful sleep.



As pines the feathery monarch of the air,  
When servile chains forbid his presence there ;  
To soar o'er earth, where man dare not intrude,  
'Mid beetling crags, that foster solitude ;  
To float where clouds their vapoury garlands  
bring  
To deck the plumes on his expanded wing ;  
To gaze unflinching at the beams which play  
In noontide splendours round the orb of day ;  
To perch 'mid deserts' uncongenial tracts,  
Or lave unscared by foaming cataracts.—  
E'en so the soul, distent with thoughts sublime,  
Blends with an element unsway'd by Time ;  
Wastes not a glance upon the panting clod  
That holds in thrall the soaring demigod—  
But borne on Fancy's pinions strains on high  
The bonds which link it with mortality ;—  
There, fluttering wildly, in impotent rage,  
It flaps its wings against its wiry cage,  
Till Life's stronghold—the beating heart,—recalls  
The rebel spirit to its prison walls.

Beside yon stream,—where branching elms arise,—  
The mouldering ruin of a cottage lies ;

Around the scatter'd fragments widely spread,  
The silvery lustre of the moon is shed,  
As if to consecrate a lonely spot  
By Heav'n remembered, though by man forgot.  
Still aged seers, when memory recalls  
The clambering woodbine that once deck'd its walls,  
With heads uncovered, pause beneath the shade  
In which that wreck is sombrely array'd,  
Whilst bygone incidents crowd free and fast,  
And force hot tears as tributes to the Past.

They tell a tale,—when in the tattling vein—  
As on their hearts some sweet bewitching strain  
Is played by jocund Humour—of a day  
When they were young, with spirits light and gay,  
And looked on aged men with hoary hair,  
Whose brows were furrowed with thick lines of  
care,—  
As children now in turn will stand and gaze  
On their bent forms in wonder and amaze,  
And ask their mothers, in untutored tongue,  
“If such old men could ever have been young.”—  
Of one, who dwelt where now those fragments lie  
Almost unheeded by the passer-by :

Whose winsome movements, cast a magic spell  
Like fabled Fairy's, round that lovely dell.  
Yet in whose track, with footsteps sure and slow  
Misfortune passed, and her attendant Woe ;  
Whilst iron Fate, on wanton Ruin smiled,  
As Death entombed fair Nature's loveliest child.

Thus runs the tale :—ere yet their raven hair  
Was silvered o'er by sorrow, time, or care ;  
Ere human ills with persecuting sway  
Had from their cheeks chased rosy Health away,  
A lovely cottage rose in rustic pride  
Upon that babbling streamlet's verdant side.  
The towering elms, that now in sadness wave  
Their spreading branches o'er its tombless grave,  
Were then but saplings, bent by every breeze,  
And not as now, umbrageous stately trees,  
Whose giant trunks their leafy garlands rear  
High o'er the spire that decks yon house of prayer.

A stagnant pool with slimy leaves o'erspread  
Usurps the spot, where once a garden shed  
The fragrant perfumes of well-tended flow'rs.  
The box-bound path, the honeysuckles bowers,



The old slate dial, and the vine-clad wall,  
The busy hive, the bending fruit-trees—all  
Have like the cottage crumbled to decay,  
And passed from earth like sounds of yesterday.  
One only relic has been spared by Fate,  
And that lies broken—'tis the wicket gate  
That in green livery was placed as guard  
Betwixt the garden and the old churchyard.  
Yes ! there it rests, unheeded in the dust,  
Its once bright latch corroded o'er with rust,  
Its hinges broken, and the paint which graced  
Its smoothened bars, in other days, defaced.  
Mid loosened stones, and thistles half entombed,  
Though mouldering fast, it yet lies unconsumed.

Oft has it swung as though in wild delight,  
When sinless infant claimed baptismal rite ;  
Oft creaked with glee when orange blossoms vied  
With clustering curls to deck the blushing bride :  
Yea, moan'd in turn whene'er the pastor read  
O'er life's fall'n tower the service for the dead.  
That last sad prayer, breathed o'er the useless clod  
Which held the breath of an omniscient God.  
Ah ! as the grave receives its sacred trust,  
 As sinks the empty casket—"dust to dust."

What earthly sound so much the sense appals  
As the loose clay that on the coffin falls ;  
Think on it, ye ! o'er whom bright Fortune reigns  
Who deem, the poor man's very touch profanes ;  
Who fawn on all *more potent* ! and would hold  
E'en Heaven in fief, could it be bought for gold,  
Yea, from that Heaven expel, all those who die  
Unknown to power, or galled by poverty.  
A day *will* come, ye may not think of Pride,  
Though o'er your dust a leper's bones abide.  
Nor frown on those, whose clownish feet may  
tread  
In rustic sport above your chilly bed.  
Nor spurn the worm that leaves its slimy trace  
On what the world once called a comely face !—  
Think on it well. The soft voluptuous eye,  
The heart that bounds responsive to a sigh,  
The lips that love pants ardently to press,  
The voice that soothes with melting tenderness—  
Each may be changed, within a short-lived day  
To what men dread—from which they turn away,  
Whilst on the brow Disdain once made his throne,  
Shall gloat corruption loathsome and lone.  
Ambition, Riches, Wealth, and worldly Power  
Avail but little in Death's solemn hour ;

The clay-cold tenement, so cramped and small,  
Is quite sufficient to contain them all.  
The flowery orator may charm and bind  
Soul, reason, sense, yea, sway the thinking mind.  
The holy preacher in his mild discourse  
May strike the guilty sinner with remorse.  
Each may in turn command bright tears to rise  
And flow in gushing streamlets from the eyes ;  
But nought, such humbling feelings can impart  
As the mute grave—its sermon probes the heart.

Within that cottage when yon gate look'd gay,  
The Village Pastor lived—he had, they say,  
One lovely grandchild—oft in evening hours  
They'd sport together 'mid Spring's vernal flowers.  
And he would laugh, and play, and share her joy,  
And feel as though he were again a boy.  
'Till shortened breath, and pains awakened, told  
The grey-haired sage that he was weak and old.

She was an orphan, orphaned at her birth,  
As pure a blossom as e'er sprung from earth ;  
No eye maternal watched the slumbering child,  
Nor on her artless prattling fondly smiled ;

No kindred milk her infant wants supplied,  
Her widowed mother brought her forth—and died.  
Dismal and sad her entrance to our sphere,  
Cradled as 'twere upon a parent's bier—  
All thought the mother slumbered, but the breath  
Had fled, and left the helpless babe with Death—  
Alone with Death, and yet it smiled on him  
Less like a babe, than Heav'n's pure cherubim.

On Time's rude stream, thus unattended thrown,  
Almost unfriended, helpless, and alone :—  
Beneath a neighbouring cottier's fostering care  
The thriving infant daily grew more fair.  
Endeared to all by Heaven engendered ties,  
Each saw with hope the dawn of Reason rise :  
Each felt an interest in her budding spring :—  
The name of Orphan is a sacred thing—  
And through the country round, that rosy girl  
Was loved, admired, and called “The Village Pearl.”

Upon the rich green grassy sward, which lay,  
Between the cottage and the main highway,  
At even's tide, would little Elsie play :



And as the rustics pass'd—their labours done—  
Each would hold converse with the prattling one :  
Not as with children men are wont to speak,  
But with a blush upon each swarthy cheek ;  
Respectful tones, and bashful downcast eyes,  
As though they spake with one from Paradise.  
And she would call them by their several names—  
The village belles—the venerable dames,—  
She knew them all—so oft had each been there,  
To share the goodly Pastor's cheer, or prayer.  
Oft when she'd scramble to her grandsire's knee,  
And part his silvery locks in playful glee ;  
Singing the while in low infantine tone,  
Such warbling songs as childhood calls its own :  
The thoughtless carols of that stammering tongue,  
Like silver bells o'er peaceful waters rung,  
Would make the old man close the sacred tome,  
And muse on one, whose solitary home,  
Was where the dew-kiss'd grass at sunrise waves—  
As sport light zephyrs—o'er the lonely graves.

Oh Retrospect ! thou shadowy, motley friend,  
What varied thoughts upon thy steps attend :

Unknown to Infancy—and seldom found,  
Where Youth and Beauty tread the fairy ground  
Of unsubstantial vision.—But where'er  
Misfortune banquets, thou art present there,  
Digging away the dust that Time has cast,  
Around the carcass of the buried Past,  
Which, disentomb'd, seems in the same gay dress  
That deck'd its form in days of happiness.

Oft when in fretful mood, or thinking vein,  
Young Elsie strove untiringly to gain  
His busied thoughts,—the peevishness of age  
Would sit in frowns upon his brow, and wage  
A petty warfare, with the heart, which strove  
In loving all, to still find more to love.  
Then would he turn, and chide the startled child,  
And she would weep, and fix on him her mild  
Ethereal eyes. In that confiding gaze  
His soul would see a face of earlier days,  
As, closely clinging to her earthly stay,  
Her looks would chase the gathering frowns away.  
No longer chid, but cradled on his breast,  
His was the task to lull her cares to rest.

Around his neck her little arms would twine  
As to its sole supporter clings the Vine :  
Against his heart her little one would beat,  
Seeking as 'twere a more secure retreat,  
Whilst sobs to smiles, and tears to girlish glee  
Were changed, as Age caress'd pure Infancy.

Oh, blessed hours of Infancy ! ere Time  
Has taught the mind to scan the page of Crime ;  
When all around is as a blissful dream  
Of smiling happiness ;—when every theme  
Possesses novelty ;—not vernal flowers  
More pure, more chaste, than childhood's happy hours.  
Then Earth seems Paradise ; its utmost bound  
The massive mountains, that are piled around  
The peaceful valley, raised by God on high,  
As props, on which Heav'n's concave canopy  
Is reared aloft !—the soaring clouds that spread  
Their thin and dusky particles o'erhead  
Seem wreaths of smoke that from rude cots arise  
And pendant move between us and the skies.  
Oh, blissful hours ! when other worlds career  
Through darkened space around our earthly sphere  
Lighting night's ebon vault : the stars appear

To childhood's mind, as chinks through which are  
given,

Stray rays of beauties only seen in heaven ;  
Or torches held by angels, whilst the sun  
Sleeps o'er the hills, his race of glory done ;  
When the pale moon, in every monthly change,  
Appears a paradox, than all—more strange ;  
High poised in air, whilst clouds career below,  
Like Hope, she shines, though dimm'd by dark'ning  
woe,

So Noah's ark with whelming waters strove,  
And yon lone star seems his returning dove.

Weeks changed to months, and months stole years  
away,

Whilst Elsie grew more lovely, and less gay,—  
Less like a child, and more like those we see  
In happy dreams : her sweet simplicity,  
Like Beauty's robe, arranged by tasteful Art,  
Veiled her fair form—yet did not hide her heart,  
Her virgin heart, untainted, pure, and good,  
That priceless gem of opening womanhood.  
Oh ! she was fair and beautiful ; her face  
A living mirror of her soul ; there grace



And maiden modesty, with truth combined,  
In one sweet index of a guileless mind ;  
Such was our mother, Eve, ere man was driven  
From Eden's garden by insulted Heaven,  
That glorious Heaven which happiest spirits share,  
And such as Elsie are the angels there.

Old Time, whose heavy and unsparing hand,  
Nor Wealth, nor Art, nor Beauty can withstand,  
Paused, as he saw the child assume the maid,  
And lent her clustering curls a darker shade,  
Rounded her form, and bade Perfection's glow  
Dance on her velvet cheek ;—the virgin snow  
Less pure, less spotless than that guileless breast,  
Where youth and innocence were lull'd to rest.

But where was he 'neath whose paternal care  
“The Village Pearl” grew brighter? did he share—  
As in her childhood—all her gushing soul ?  
Or had the clambering vine o'ertopped the pole,  
To which in infancy it fondly clung?  
Where was her aged grandsire? had the tongue  
From whose wise precepts her expanding mind  
Had learned to soar, been silent, or less kind?

The hand that guided her, the eyes that shone,  
In earlier days upon the prattling one,  
Were they as then they were? Did love so pure,  
So holy, so confiding, still endure?  
Did those benignant smiles of goodness grace  
His wrinkled brow and venerable face?  
Or had invidious Time, by beauty charmed  
In decking youth, passed old age by unharmed,  
Erasing lines that thought and sorrow make,  
(As lasting landmarks)—*all* for Elsie's sake?  
Yes, still he lived; but ah! how great the  
change—

The ways of Providence are wise, and strange,  
Past finding out: in such a world as this,  
We drain life's bitter cup; the cup of bliss  
Is but a fantasy—the dregs are woe.  
The bliss we dream of, and that angels know,  
Is the unseen hereafter; the sole joy  
Of earth is Change—that mingled with alloy  
And evanescent! Such the curse of man,  
Since on his disobedience fell the ban;  
Sorrow and death must be the lot of all;  
Such they have been since our first father's fall.

Hence as men enter on the final stage,  
That tottering rampart of the life, "old age,"  
They learn, and only then, that not of earth  
Is real happiness ; its place of birth  
Seems more remote, more vague, than when at first  
They grasped a bubble, only formed to burst ;—  
In ardent youth they gave the shadow chase,  
Through years they followed it, yet lost the race.  
Sometimes when mirth has gamboll'd lightly by,  
Like rays of sunshine through a clouded sky,  
They deemed the prize at hand ; more eager grown,  
They cast their snare, but found the phantom flown.  
So children chase that wanderer of air,  
The gaudy butterfly, so brilliant there ;  
Grasp the frail thing, so fair 'neath sunny skies,  
But find, when captured, that its beauty dies.

Yes, he was changed. Time had been harsh with  
him ;  
His step was tottering, and his sight more dim,  
Around his neck long gathering years had cast  
That cumbrous millstone of the shrouded past,  
Whose leaden weight bends down the hoary head,  
As though it sought its home amongst the dead.

His voice had lost the fulness of its tone,  
And midst the wreck sad Memory reigned alone,—  
A lonely monarch, o'er a lonely state,  
Where all was hopeless, lorn, and desolate.

Age bears a something that must needs affect  
The thinking mind with pity and respect.  
Pity that aught ethereal as the soul  
Should writhe beneath mortality's control ;  
That the breathed spirit of Omnicience, given  
To purge the essence of our dross, for heaven,  
'Neath time and sorrow dwindles to a span,  
Making a Babe of what God made a Man ;  
Respect for wrinkles which old Time's rough plough  
Despite of art, sinks deeply in the brow ;  
For past experience, which can but be found  
Where years, like milestones, mark the travell'd  
ground,—  
Ground which once passed can never be retrod,  
Gives dust to dust, and yields the soul to God.

But there was one, whene'er he sought to move,—  
One living emblem of respect and love,—  
Whose jealous care his slightest wants supplied,

And who was ever by that old man's side.  
In shady evening's cool, refreshing hour  
She'd lead him forth; and 'neath the perfumed bower  
Beguile the time, by reading from that page  
Whose words give solace to declining age;  
And read by her! no choiring cherub's voice  
More musical. Ah! then would he rejoice  
In future hope, and as he drank the sounds,  
His swelling heart would almost burst its bounds,  
And make his eyes o'erflow. Yes, he would weep  
Big tears of thankfulness, till soothing sleep  
Had curtained vision. Slowly on her breast  
His drooping head would sink in placid rest,  
Whilst Elsie ceased to read, and watch'd the smile  
That deck'd his furrow'd features for awhile.  
Ah! he was happy then. In dreams of bliss,  
His half-enfranchised soul would soar from this  
Rude world of sorrow to some lovelier sphere,  
Where he was younger—happier, than here.  
There would he see the bright winged cherubim  
In glory clad; and they would sing to him,  
As Elsie used on earth. Wildly his gaze  
Roamed o'er their forms in rapture and amaze,

Till wonder seem'd delight ! But where was she,  
His guide in age, his joy in misery ?  
She was not there. In vain his eyes would rove  
O'er bands of seraphim ;—in vain he strove  
To hear that voice whose melody had given  
To earth a foretaste of ecstatic heaven.  
She was not there ; and midst that bright array  
He felt alone, for Elsie was away.  
He called her name, and, as he called, the scene  
Changed to a desert land ;—bright and serene  
As dreams could make it was the ether sky ;  
And he was there alone,—was there to die ;  
To die, whilst heaven look'd gay, though earth was  
bare,  
For grisly Famine had conveyed him there.  
He writhed in agony ! No hand was near  
To raise his head,—no sympathetic tear,  
Fell like the balmy dews on drooping flowers.  
He felt his solitude ;—his palsied powers  
Refused all aid ; and Death's envenom'd dart,  
Already probed his lacerated heart.  
Again he called, or strove to call that name,  
But on his lips it died ; just then a flame

Of glory burst around him, and amid  
Its dazzling beams an angel's form lay hid  
From mortal sight ; though his expiring gaze  
Was given the power to pierce the glittering rays  
That swath'd her round ; she rais'd his drooping  
head,

And through his veins new life in rapture shed.  
His eyelids closed, as on his cheek her breath  
Of fragrant perfume danced. The dart of Death  
Her aerial hand withdrew. She spoke ! that tone  
Was like the soft voice of the missing one.  
He felt her lips upon his brow ;—the spell  
Was broken by that touch ; but who can tell  
That old man's thoughts as he awaken'd, found  
His Elsie's arms more fondly clasp'd around  
His sinking frame ? Did then those changes seem  
But idle mockery ? was all a dream ?  
Yes, all !—except the *angel's kiss* which broke  
The spell. For *Elsie kissed him* as he 'woke.

Thus lived they there : he was the world to her,  
And she was all to him—his comforter,  
His guardian, and his friend ; were she away,  
His heart was heavy ; were she near, 'twas gay,—



Gay as a heart could be, whose every throb  
Knock'd at the gates of death. What hand could rob  
That crumbling ruin of the only tie  
That made it sweet to live, and pain to die !  
As by the prophet, whom the ravens fed,  
The angel stood, when o'er his soul was spread  
Mute slumber's drowsy pall ; ere at command  
He rose and journey'd from a fruitful land  
Into the bleak and sterile wilderness.—  
So by that couch, would gentle Elsie press,  
Where sleep—death's sightless counterfeit—had  
bound  
His silent charm, and shadowy web around  
Her grandsires fading sense ! and watch and pray  
Till night shrank cowering from the smiles of day.  
For well she knew, that on that verge was he  
Where souls hang trembling o'er—eternity.

But there was one, had lately learn'd to share  
With him a portion of her love and care.  
One elder than herself, though in the prime  
Of manly vigour—the rude hand of Time  
Had set no signet on his brow—the fire  
Of ardour burned in every vein. Desire



Laugh'd from his sparkling eye ; his step was light,  
Yet firm ; his features play-grounds for delight.  
His voice upon the ear, like music rung,  
So rich its varied tones—less sweetly strung  
The lover's lute, whose dulcet melody  
When Silence sleeps, bids Echo sing for glee.

A stranger there ! none reck'd from whence he came,  
And Elsie only knew the youth by name.  
In cities bred ; well-vers'd in every art  
That wins affection, plays upon the heart,  
Dazzles the sense, and seldom fails to bind  
In loves bright chains, the inexperienced mind ;  
The burnish education lends, mere words,  
The happy charm society affords,  
Combined with Nature's gifts—a faultless form.  
A soul that seem'd magnanimous and warm.  
Each lent its aid to win that priceless gem,  
The purest pearl in beauty's diadem.

And was he lov'd ? Oh ! ye who mete the heart  
Of purity and innocence by art,  
Who wear hypocrisy to shelter vice,  
And sell affection at the highest price,

Whose studied blush, and prudish prurient smile  
Screens secret guilt,—as does the placid Nile  
The scaly and destructive crocodile,  
Whose passion makes each votary its slave,  
And blasts all flow'rs on virtue's early grave.  
Ye cannot tell,—to your distemper'd gaze,  
Love's holy flame, seems passion's lustful blaze.  
Its name in fading echo lives alone ;  
A mournful echo—an expiring groan,  
A dismal knell, that ever haunts the ear  
And whispers “ happiness lies buried here.”  
How can ye judge ? where hearts are bought and  
sold,  
Love kicks the beam, outweighed by sordid Gold.  
Gold is your alcahest ; the potent spell  
That tests all worth,—the heart its crucible.

Yes, he was lov'd by her ; her love was pure  
As God's own breath, not silent and demure,  
But all confiding ; every artless look,  
An open page in Nature's loveliest book.  
She never blush'd ! Blushes are veils which  
shame  
Draws over startled modesty. The name



Of guilt and sin was only known to her  
As it is known to angels, and the blur  
Stamp'd on the foreheads of the base by crime,  
Her simple mind ascrib'd alone to Time.  
Oh ! blissful ignorance, that look'd on man  
As God had form'd him first, ere earth began  
To nurture weeds, whose influence destroys  
Her fairest buds, and poisons all her joys.

At length that day to which young hearts aspire,  
The wedding-day arriv'd. The old grandsire  
Seem'd younger by some years. The blooming bride  
Struggled with tears she could not—would not  
hide.

She strove to smile, she wish'd to be more gay,  
But then the tears would wash the smiles away.  
In simple unpretending white array'd,  
She seem'd some wandering cherub that had stray'd  
From Heaven's bright crystal halls ! whose place of  
birth  
Was purer, holier, happier than our earth,  
Or like the angel, that with veiled eyes,  
Wept as our parents quitted Paradise.

The bridegroom was more free ! yet on his brow  
Stern contemplation sat. The nuptial vow  
Is Nature's holiest tie ! that vow once spoken  
Unites two hearts, and must by Death be broken.  
Man has no power to break that sacred yoke,  
Time but cements it. Fate must give the stroke.

They cross'd the garden—pass'd the wicket gate,  
Whilst joy-bells rung their merry peals. Elate,  
The rustics welcomed them. The pastor wept,  
And paused beside the lonely grave where slept  
The mother of that bride. In every eye  
A tear-drop rose ; in every breast, a sigh  
Burst sadly forth. She too had walked that way,  
Clad in white garments on her bridal-day ;  
And those who saw her said, that Elsie there,  
Their "Village Pearl," was not a whit more fair.  
They pass'd her resting-place, and gained the porch,  
The simple entrance to their village church ;  
And as they cross'd it, those rude hearts essay'd  
To breath a blessing ; and the elders pray'd  
That Elsie's lot might be less stern and hard  
Than *hers*, who slumbered in that old churchyard.

Though years had pass'd, since 'neath that holy  
fane

The pastor's voice was heard, yet once again,  
In surplice clad, as in the days of yore,  
He read that service oftentimes read before.  
His trembling tones by strong emotion press'd,  
An echo found in every listener's breast ;  
The gushing tears that would not be controll'd,  
His furrow'd cheeks impeded. Still they roll'd  
In briny drops upon the sacred page,  
And left their signets for an after age.

It was a scene of sadness—not of bliss,  
And when those two were one, the nuptial kiss  
Press'd on the bride's white brow, was chill as  
death.

The bridegroom's cheek was pale—he gasped for  
breath.

She shudder'd at his touch ! but then the Wife  
Burst through the Maid—he was her other life,  
Her hope, her guide, her counsellor, her friend,  
Her fellow-pilgrim to her journey's end.  
She clasped his hand—implored him to be gay,  
And as she smiled, his weakness pass'd away.

Thus stood they there, *half-way* on Life's rough road,  
Betwixt the cradle and that cold abode,  
Where sorrow sleeps in peace—where pomp and  
pride

With Death and dust lie calmly side by side—  
Where wealth avails not—where distinction ends—  
Where foes with foes, are mild as friends with friends,  
And where the peer has no advantage o'er  
The squalid beggar that disgraced his door.

They led the pastor home. The sacred rite  
Had been performed, and every soul was light.  
Young Love was blithe—Mirth's joyous laughter  
loud ;

Their souls no longer were behind a cloud,  
But all was bright as noon-day. Hope was there  
With Fancy, building castles in the air ;  
And Concord played sweet strains of melody  
Upon their heart strings. Time fled rapidly  
Chased by Delight, till midnight's sable plume  
Nodded o'er slumb'ring lids in silent gloom.

Days seem'd but hours, so fleetly did they pass—  
'Tis ever thus with Youth—Time's tell-tale glass—



For it seems turned *too* slowly. Youth but knows  
The side where Summer sits. The chilling snows  
Of wintry age are strangers—it would mingle  
The future with the present ; yet no single  
Thought of declining years should dim the view,  
All must be sunshine still—all bright—all new.  
Vain dreamer Youth ! those hours whose leaden feet  
Ye chide for *seeming* tardiness, are fleet  
And overtake Old Age! Ah, then the tide  
Of ardent hope is changed ! on every side  
Death strikes at such as ye ! the eye will fear  
To glance beyond the present ! dark and drear  
The prospect of the future—every tomb  
Will whisper sadly, “ We can make thee room.”  
The heart will shrink, as chimes each funeral bell,  
For its own depths re-echo every knell.  
“ Those in the windows then shall cease to see ;  
The light grasshopper shall a burthen be ;  
The broken wheel beside the cistern cast,  
With life’s loosed silver cord must lie at last.”\*  
The Sun alone unchanged shall brightly glow  
Gilding this epitaph, “ Dust lies below.”

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\* Ecclesiastes xii.

Then homes grew dearer. Village firesides held  
Their happy courts—from thence dull Form ex-  
    pelled,

Rode naked on the blast, till Fashion lent  
The shivering wretch her robe—smiling Content  
Gave ear to simple tales—unmingled joy  
Cozened old Care—that mischief-working boy,  
Unblushing Cupid, winged his love tip'd darts  
With gentle sighs, and at untutored hearts  
Sped them from sparkling eyes—secure his aim,  
Congenial spirits felt that sacred flame  
Which by a touch augmented—nay a tone,  
Blends two harmonious souls for life in one.—  
Ah, sweet fireside ! where rapture and delight  
With magic charms illume the dreary night ;  
Where Youth's prolific garden teems with flowers,  
Rarer than ever bloom'd in Eden's bowers,  
And Age throws off Care's ever lengthening chain,  
To live its youth in retrospect again.

The cottage had its fireside also ; there  
Sat the good pastor in his old arm-chair,  
Wrapt in deep thought ; whilst Elsie by his side  
The flying thread with skilful fingers plied.



Pensive she seem'd and pale ;—there hung a weight  
Of care around her heart. Arthur of late  
Had in the city made a longer stay  
Than was his wont. A week had stol'n away,  
Since last he left her, and—she knew not why—  
Whene'er she strove to smile, a tyrant sigh  
Would fright the dancing dimples from her face,  
And leave a tear perchance to mark the place.  
If in her hours of loneliness she sung,  
Her heavy heart would paralyze her tongue ;  
Make Hope and Fear the bonds of thought confess,  
Or drown her warblings in forgetfulness.

Another week on lagging wheels roll'd past,  
And each dull hour seem'd longer than the last ;  
Longer and sadder—such the freaks that Fate  
Delights to practice on the desolate.  
She never murmured, but her fading cheek  
Told tales of fears, her tongue disdained to speak,  
Whilst swollen eyes gave earnest proof that she  
Had sat in Sorrow's lone society.

But 'twas at night,—when, pillow'd on the breast  
Of soothing sleep, her grandsire lay at rest—

In her own chamber's solitude, her soul  
Would loose its pent-up floods; then tears would  
roll,

Unfetter'd from those orbs, whose mellow light  
Like stars 'mid show'rs, shone sparkling—though  
less bright.

Whilst the dull lamp shed Hope's expiring ray  
Around the couch where Disappointment lay.

His absence were less painful, could she prove,  
That still he thought of her.—But constant love  
Grows soonest jealous; and a careless tone  
The idol utters—when the heart is lone—  
Preys on the mind in midnight's silent gloom,  
Like greedy vulture o'er some outraged tomb.

Strange he was silent too,—had he but sent  
One short epistle, it had brought content.  
Had he but known what charms mere words impart  
When love indites them, to a constant heart,  
What days of loneliness a letter cheers,  
Caressing hope, and lulling jealous fears—  
She must have heard from him,—for lovely woman  
Though *half* an angel, is by *nature* human,

And doubts will rise where apathy is shown,  
For love, like childhood, cannot rest—alone.

Ere he had left her—was it fantasy ?  
No ! no ! 'twas bitter truth :—she deem'd that he  
Was more reserved ;—his hours had all been given  
To gloomy thoughts ; his temper was uneven :  
A tender word from her had failed to break  
The spell that chain'd him ; still for his dear sake  
She'd wear a smile, and press upon his brow  
Those lips so ruddy then, so pallid now.  
Then would he rise in eagerness, and chide  
With hasty speech his all-devoted bride,  
As though that kiss, whose touch could not profane  
A cherub's cheek, had set the brand of Cain  
Upon his lofty forehead. Did she seek  
To learn the cause of anger—o'er his cheek,  
The hues of death would glance ; his trembling  
frame  
Shake, as though palsy had withheld his claim  
But for a space ; his starting eyeballs glare,  
As though earth's ills had found their focus there.  
Thick perspiration from his features burst ;  
His teeth gnash wildly, as if fiends accurst

Tugged at his soul. But when the fit had past,  
And Elsie's arms around his neck were cast,  
His breath with hers would blend in unison,  
As though their happy hours had but begun.  
Weaken'd and sad, upon her faithful breast,  
His racking head would droop in search of rest,  
Till slumber seal'd his eyes. Yet, still 'twas  
strange

She inly thought,—Had she produced that change?  
Why should her questions wake such fiendish rage?  
Why should her voice in turn that storm assuage?  
Wild, too, his looks, till charm'd by smiles away,  
When *first* he kiss'd her, on their *wedding-day*.

Such thoughts were her companions, night by night,  
In tedious hours, when sleep and peace invite,  
The drowsy world to lay its limbs at ease,  
Whilst Nature brightens all their energies.  
But o'er her couch no roses had been strown,  
Or if they had—their thorns remain'd alone :  
Remain'd, whilst restless thought fled hurrying by,  
Like clouds careering 'neath an angry sky ;  
Which shed o'er fertile plains such sullen shade,  
That sunshine sickens in the gloom they've made.



'Twas thus with Elsie ! by her restless bed  
When Silence kept his watch ! the hydra head  
Of dreary Vigil scowled. Should slumbers creep,  
And kiss'her weary eyes with gentle sleep,  
Distemper'd dreams would gambol through her  
brain,  
And fitful Fancy, with her spectral train,  
Harass her burthen'd mind. Each sudden start  
Show'd Hope and Fear at variance in her heart.  
Each word—half utter'd—at its birth expir'd  
In murmur'ring cadence—till by Frenzy fir'd,  
Her heaving breast would scare repose away,  
Whilst languor darken'd the approach of day.

Oh, virtuous woman ! Nature's paragon :  
Purest of gems that glow beneath our sun,  
And ornament dull earth : thou art the goal  
Of bliss terrestrial. Man's lofty soul  
May scale ambition's tower, but all is bleak,  
Unless thy fragrant breath perfume his cheek.  
What,—lacking thee—were all his pomp and  
pow'r?  
Man is the Tree—but woman is the Flow'r,—



The fragile Flow'r, that ornaments the Tree  
When both are blent in sacred unity.  
Oh, constant woman! though thy smiles impart  
In sunniest hours fresh raptures to the heart ;  
Though music breathes in every tone of thine,  
And every glance of feeling is divine ;  
When fortune smiles we cannot judge of thee,  
Thy only test, is stern adversity.

Man vaunts his love, and calls thee changeable.  
'Tis false—with thee all true affections dwell.  
He, like the vane, revolves with every breeze,  
Ensnared by each new beauty that he sees :  
Skips like the wanton bee from rose to rose,  
Sipping all sweets the loveliest flow'r's disclose ;  
Too often stamping on a spotless name,  
The brand indelible of burning shame,  
Whilst fading blossoms blighted by his breath,  
Their dewy features hide in silent death.  
Such deeds, oh, MAN ! are thine : the hectic flush  
Of guilt, enshrouding virtue's modest blush,  
Had ne'er been but for THEE. Ghastly its glow,  
For broken hearts lie festering below.

The hollow laugh—that echo from the grave—  
Once rose like music o'er the sleeping wave ;  
The glassy eye, the wild unearthly shriek,  
The wasting frame, the sunk and pallid cheek,  
*These* are *thy* handiwork. Yet darest thou say,  
That woman's love is frail as April's day ?  
Deem ye her heart is but a worthless toy,  
To sport and tamper with, perchance destroy,—  
A senseless block, a puppet form'd to please  
Your lordly lusts in pamper'd hours of ease ?  
Go ! go ! ye know her not ! her constant soul,  
True as the needle to the northern pole ;  
Nor time, nor tyrant circumstance can sever,  
She loves but “once,” yet fondly loves “for  
ever.”

Still by the fireside stood one vacant chair,  
Unused, for Arthur sat no longer there.  
Lonely it seem'd, a sad memento left  
By Fate to harass one of joys bereft ;  
And yet the reft one priz'd it ; it would raise  
Sad recollections of less lonely days ;  
On it for hours her languid eyes would rest,  
Until the vacuum, by Fancy dress'd,

Assumed her husband's form. But then a sound  
Would break the mystic spell, and once unwound  
Her sinking heart, by dismal clouds o'ercast,  
Would sit with Sorrow and survey the past ;  
Or, like a wreck lash'd by an angry sea,  
Toss on the waves of restless memory.

On his swift passage to death's narrow bed,  
Nought cheer'd the old man's soul. He hourly read  
Upon the page of Elsie's brow the tale  
Expiring Hope relates. So fair, so pale,  
So beautiful withal, though still to him  
One of heaven's minist'ring cherubim,  
Yet could he see that at her root of life  
The foe of nature delved ; his vengeful knife  
Had hack'd the blossoms from her cheeks, and shed  
Her smiles like flowers that fade above the dead.

And they must part at last : he from the dove  
His age had nurtur'd with paternal love,  
Whose gentle music lull'd his soul to rest,  
When fortune favour'd, or when care oppress'd.  
She, from the tutor of her earlier years,  
Whose lips had kiss'd away infantine tears ;



Whose hand had led her o'er the grassy sod ;  
Whose tongue had taught the lisping babe of God.  
Yes, they must part,—her other self away ;  
Night had no balm for her, no charms the day ;  
Hope's smiles, which buoyed her in her virgin spring,  
Were hid of late behind his trembling wing ;  
The veil of mystery that hemm'd her round,  
Became each day more murky and profound.  
“ The Village Pearl's ” pure glow was rarely seen,  
The *mortal touch of man* had dimmed its sheen.  
Upon her knees she silently implored  
Her grandsire's benediction. Not a word  
That day had pass'd their lips. When hearts  
o'erflow  
With the extremes of happiness or woe,  
Strong feeling ties the tongue, and language dies,  
Whilst souls converse through medium of the eyes.  
She knelt beside his chair, his aged form  
In strong convulsions shook. Fate's fiercest storm  
Howled through the branches of that scathed tree,  
As he arose in tottering majesty ;  
Upon her head his trembling hands were laid  
In holy benison ; his lips essay'd

To breathe the prayer; but though no sounds were  
given,

Yet such mute breathings find their way to heaven.  
With hoary locks thrown back, and eyes uprais'd,—  
Like Israel's priest, when on the altar blaz'd  
The sacrificial lamb—supernal light  
Of glory deck'd his brow, as though that sight,  
Which age and time had dimm'd, had power to see  
His blessing ratified by Deity.

Slow by her side he knelt, her arms were cast  
Around his kneeck ; the Present and the Past  
Embracing and embraced. He fondly strained  
The loved one to his breast ; one hope remained,  
One glorious hope, cementing earthly love,  
The hope of meeting in a world above.

A holy kiss upon her brow he press'd,  
That solemn seal assured her she was blest.

Slowly she rose, his venerable face  
Bowed meekly to the ground,—she left the place,  
To seek amid the city's darkling maze,  
The partner of her heart in happier days.  
The pastor raised his head—he called her name,  
“Elsie ! dear Elsie !” yet no answer came.

Wildly he called, by viewless echos spread,  
That name was choruss'd o'er the slumbering dead.  
The old church walls delighted to prolong  
Those fading tones in soft and shadowy song.  
But still she came not—she whose life pass'd o'er,  
Anticipating wishes ere they wore  
The sounding garb of speech. He felt bereft  
Of the sole comfort time and age had left  
His widow'd heart. Though short might be her stay,  
He knew *he* only lived from day to day.  
Life's flickering flame each hour more feebly burn'd,  
And soon the useless lamp must be o'erturn'd ;  
His spirit sank within him : who should cheer  
His soul in passing from this earthly sphere,  
To that bright heaven he look'd for? where those  
eyes  
He hoped should light his path to Paradise?  
“Elsie!” he cried, “Dear Elsie, where art thou?  
This heart ne'er felt its helpless lot till now;  
It never lack'd thy angel eloquence  
Till now to sooth its fleetly fading sense ;  
And hast thou left me in my age alone?  
God shield thee, child! His righteous will be done.”

## Book the Second.

Take physick pomp ;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel ;  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

*King Lear.*

FAREWELL ! ye lovely vales, ye peaceful dells,  
Ye fragrant meads where Contemplation dwells ;  
Ye murm'ring streams, ye mountains lone and gray,  
Ye sylvan shades where sporting zephyrs play ;  
Summer has left ye to your hapless fate,  
Autumn has pass'd, and ye are desolate.  
Repulsive Winter, in his dreary shroud,  
Howls in the tempest, and from cloud to cloud  
Rolls on his thund'ring car. His lightnings glance  
In wild coruscant fury through expanse,  
With torrents warring,—as though Hell had striven  
To storm the golden walls encircling Heaven.  
Ye vales and dells, how bleak ye are, how wild !  
Ye meads so fragrant, when kind Summer smil'd,  
Where is your beauty now ? Ye murm'ring streams,  
No longer silvered by pale Cynthia's beams,

But lock'd in icy bands, or drown'd in floods,  
Ye sylvan shades, where now your perfumed buds ?  
Where soothing zephyr? whose melodious voice  
Bade feathery tribes in fellowship rejoice !  
Ye mountains lone, on whose majestic heads  
The gorgeous sun in glittering splendour treads,  
When Spring salutes the world, o'er which are cast  
In Summer's eve, his golden glories *last* ;  
Why are your heads by vapoury mists defaced ?  
Why have the snows your dauntless breasts encased  
In frozen armour? Do ye mourn for earth,  
Or the past ages Time has brought to birth ?  
Or for the "Pearl" that graced yon lovely dell ?  
Ye mountain streams, and sylvan shades, farewell !

But where was Elsie? Where quaint spires arise  
In pigmy grandeur, tap'ring towards the skies,  
Where lofty domes their convex forms uprear ;  
Where organs peal within the house of prayer ;  
Where trophied columns brave the scythe of Time ;  
Where Art, the favoured child of every clime,  
Pays homage meet to aught that is sublime ;  
Where friendly Commerce with huge wings unfurl'd,  
Gleans ere she flies instruction for the world ;

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Where Vice and Virtue break the sacred bread ;  
Where lying monuments insult the dead ;  
Where Wealth can look on Poverty, and close  
Its purse,—and heart—*if such it have*—to woes  
That drag a luckless brother to the tomb,  
Though both had twinn'd within one mother's womb.  
Oh ! hideous mockery ! and yet God's sun  
Resplendent gilds that modern Babylon,—  
Flings his bright beams o'er Heaven insulting spires,  
To light the cell where misery expires ;  
Whilst the same rays that dance round kingly thrones,  
May kiss the pauper—starving on the stones.

The day had pass'd, in hazy lustre shone  
The city's thousand lamps. Still hurrying on,  
The flood of life—despite the chilling air  
Harsh winter blows—flow'd ceaseless, everywhere.  
In crested chariot loll'd the pet of Fame,  
The haughty noble, or the titled dame,  
The envied heiress—each to seek delight  
In wild debauch, or halls where beauty bright  
Rob's Day of hours to squander with the Night.  
In humbler guise the wearied artizan,  
Sped from his toil, to spend with fellow man,

In social converse or in drunken brawl,  
The time when sleep should seal the eyes of all.  
And last, those faded remnants of excess,  
The debauchee ;—the maid whose loveliness  
Had with her virtue fled, and given to crime  
And lustful panders, woman's golden prime ;  
A frame polluted, yet adorned by art,  
A fellow-creature reft of hope and heart ;  
Each past regardless of the cold his way—  
The proud, the humble, the opprest, the gay,  
The rich, the poor, the feeble, and the strong,  
Swelling the city's streets with motley throng.

Omniscient Ruler ! can thy glorious earth  
To such extremes of light and shade give birth ?  
Or is it but a garden where the weeds  
Of sin are nurtured by man's evil deeds ?  
Where Virtue's flower *might* bloom in modest pride,  
Despite the rancorous poisons at its side ;  
By lifting fearlessly its buds to thee,  
Thus stamping shame on grovelling infamy,  
And spreading such refining incense round,  
That weeds would perish on that hallow'd ground.

The tide of life flow'd on, our earth its source,  
The grave its destiny ; in its swift course  
It bore "The Village Pearl." A week had made  
Sad havoc in her charms. The brightest fade,  
But seldom fade so swiftly. Woman's heart,  
When true, is like our own ; with less of art,  
And more of heaven. It is a brittler thing,  
Weaker, yet stronger ; never wandering,  
But constant until death ; weaker in fear,  
Stronger in love ; in anger less severe,  
And more forgiving—yet one harsh word spoken,  
The silver cord that binds it oft has broken.  
Deceit or coldness with a giant's strength  
Rives it in sunder—till the wreck at length  
Of all that was so lovely and so fair,  
Sinks in the whelming vortex of despair.

Seven days—seven sullied pages in the tome  
Of Destiny—since Elsie left her home,  
Had been turned o'er by Time. As each day roll'd  
Into forgetfulness, like tales long told,  
It left her wandering still. She took no rest,  
Dismal forebodings on her senses press'd,



Usurping Nature's sway. Her search had proved  
A fruitless one ! the man her soul so loved  
Had played her false ; his very name unknown  
Within the house he told her was his own.

Bewildered and amazed she wandered thence,  
But where she reck'd not. Harrowing suspense  
Mocked her no more. The world had lost its  
charms,

Life its delights, and Death his stern alarms.  
She sank upon the ground—so palsied Care  
Droops 'neath the snake-wreathed fetters of Despair—  
And craved that chilly bed where earthly woes  
With broken hearts lie down in calm repose.  
She felt her desolation—souls have sight  
Where eyes are valueless, and lack the light  
That panders to their sense. The soul can read  
A language of its own in every deed,  
A language hid from vision : and can hear  
Exquisite sounds too fine for mortal ear,  
And feel—as Elsie felt—deserted there,  
Bearing the sacred burthen women bear,  
Ere Nature calls them Mothers—drained by grief,  
The fount of feeling lent her no relief—

E'en the relief of tears. The gathering crowd  
Look'd coldly on the scene : a female bow'd  
To earth by circumstance, or guilt, for them  
Possess'd no novelty—thus men condemn  
Poor hapless souls unheard. Some pass'd their way  
And moralized on evils of the day ;  
Some pitied her estate ; yet railed at Time  
For lending life to such a child of crime.  
Her own soft sex, though far less chaste than she,  
Swept on, and wondered that such things could be.  
Regardless of the cause, each left the place,  
Ranking pure Elsie with the vile and base.

Oh ! Nature, sink in darkness ! hide thy head  
Behind a cloud of shame ! Religion—spread  
Coarse sackcloth round thy loins, and gnaw the  
dust,  
Let Charity yield up her sacred trust,  
For Earth has lost its judgment. Virtue seems  
As vice—vice, virtue. Life has two extremes,  
And only two—the moral and the vile !  
The moral bask 'neath fortune's sunny smile,  
And *such* are called the Just. The vile are those  
Who live with poverty—lie down with woes,

Who dine where famine feasts. Whene'er they die,  
No sculptured urns attest that "Here they lie."  
Yet Heaven's pale primroses and daisies bloom  
Around their graves, and scorn the trophied tomb.

At length, poor Elsie's head was raised by one  
Of sin's frail daughters ; though the charm was gone  
Which virtue lends to loveliness—some part  
Of the lost angel lingered near that heart  
Once pure and innocent. She dared to speak  
Of comfort, whilst upon her own wan cheek  
The sickly lily pined. "The Village Pearl"  
Lay on the bosom of that guilty girl,  
Whose eyes were dimm'd with tears. Though foul  
the spring,  
Those tears were pure as dew the angel's wing  
Brushes from Nature's face at morning's tide :  
Poor Elsie bless'd her—she could naught beside,  
Save pray for her—for her whose impious knee  
Ne'er bow'd to Heav'n since leagued with infamy.  
  
The tide of life flowed on—and as it past,  
Swift to her feet fair Elsie sprung aghast :  
Flung back the clustering ringlets that array'd  
Her pallid brow in sweet, though sombre shade.

With quivering lips—wild eyes, and heaving breast,  
Where fear and wonder stood alike confest,  
And arms distent—the name of “ Arthur” hung  
Half hush’d, half uttered, on her parch’d tongue.  
One effort yet—“ Arthur,” she shrieked, “ ’tis I,  
“ ’Tis Elsie calls thee !” but a bursting sigh  
Shackled her speech, as o’er the pavement roll’d  
A chariot deck’d with arms of burnish’d gold.  
She saw him but a moment, and no more,  
As swept that chariot by. Its panels bore  
Heraldic crests—and seated by his side,  
A lovely creature, with fond glance of pride  
Feasted her eyes on him, as through the air  
Careered that shriek of horror and despair.

Oh ! God, the shock was great ! the mental  
chain  
Seem’d to have tangled in her bursting brain,  
And every thought confused ! her look was wild ;  
She could not weep, but playfully she smil’d,  
And yet that smile was not the curve of mirth,  
’Twas linked with laughter foreign to our earth.  
She talk’d to forms unseen ! the piercing air  
Chill’d not her breast—a flame was raging there.

The pestilential breath of fever swept  
Her halls of life—the blood no longer crept  
In measured pulses through her veins, but sped  
Like molten lava, or those winds which spread  
Their blasting influence o'er arid plains,  
Where wo'd by burning sands the simoon reigns.

Weeks pass'd away ; and consciousness returned  
To her who sought it not. The tyrant spurned  
A willing victim.—Death resigned his claim ;  
And baffled fever, burned in his own flame  
Fled to his native hell.—Hear it, Ye meek !  
And let shame stamp her blur on every cheek ;  
Hear it, Ye just ! nor lift your eyes to Heaven,  
In idle prayers that such may be forgiven ;  
**BUT GO AND LIKEWISE ACT !** That child of sin,  
That girl abandoned, took the wanderer in ;  
Pillow'd by day the sufferer's aching head  
Upon her breast, gave her by night her bed !  
. Watched by her side, and wept—ah ! bitter tears,  
For she had been like her in earlier years ;  
Had loved—and from Love's golden paradise  
Had fallen, as fell the angels from the skies.

Elsie had loved her, ere returning mind  
Had lit her lustrous eyes—so good, so kind,  
So gentle, so enduring—day by day  
She watch'd that couch, where restless frenzy lay,  
And tended every want—e'en madness sees  
The gaze of friends mid crowding fantasies,  
And so it was with Elsie ! when the sway  
Of reason dawned again, she oft would say,  
“ That mid the fever's heat, there glow'd above  
Twin-stars suffused with dew—twin-stars of love :”  
And *those* were Mary's eyes. She knew they kept  
A ceaseless watch, and never, never slept,  
But call'd on her to live—to live and blend  
Her guiltless tears with her repentant friend ;  
To intercede for her, and waft her sighs  
Upon her prayers, like incense through the skies,  
'Till the avenging angel pass'd her door,  
And mercy whispered “ Go, and sin no more.”

Nor had she sinn'd of late ; her food had ceased  
To be the price of crime. But wants increased  
As means to stay them failed. A broken chair  
Its absent fellows mourned—the walls were bare

And comfortless—the sufferer's couch alone  
Survived the wreck—each ornament was gone  
That deck'd her simple home ; and one by one  
Her very garments were exchanged for bread ;  
Yet Elsie knew it not. Beside her bed  
The Magdalene knelt down, and dared to pray,  
“ That should temptation lead her feet astray,  
That sin might be forgiven”—her face was bow'd  
Between her wasted hands ; she sobbed aloud  
In bitterness of soul. Two paths remained  
And for each path a guide,—The one crime-stain'd ;  
The other good and pure ! Virtue was there,  
But by her side scowled Hunger and Despair,  
Twin-murderers of Hope—Vice whispered, “ Food,”  
And pointed to the slumberer—her lewd,  
Polluted laugh, in hideous discord rung,  
“ Grow pure and starve !” the mocking demon sung ;  
“ Grow pure and starve !” the cheerless room replied ;  
“ Grow pure and starve !” the viewless echos sigh'd ;  
Her tortured spirit could rebel no more,  
She rose, and tottered to the chamber door.  
Her hand was on the latch—the slumberer woke !  
*But was it Elsie or an angel spoke ?*

“ Mary !” the sound, through painful silence borne,  
Like balsam kiss’d her soul. The smile of morn,  
When hooded night shrinks from the weeping dell  
Less potent in its charm—she turned, and fell  
Upon that breast of spotless purity,  
Sobbing, “ Just heaven, there may be hope for me.”

And there in that chill room, she told a tale,  
Alas ! too often told. Haggard and pale  
As corse exhumed—to which was given the power  
Of summing life’s worst ills, in one short hour,—  
She sat and spoke. And Elsie lent her ears  
To that repentant sinner, whose warm tears  
Glisten’d amid the darkness of the room,  
As shines the glowworm ’mid surrounding gloom.  
Seduced,—abandoned,—when her hopes were young ;  
Robb’d of life’s gem, the useless casket flung  
To starve or sin, into the gulf where Time  
Sweeps the Forsaken with the *Old in Crime*,  
Where no kind hand in mercy seeks to save  
The sinking soul from guilt’s eternal grave ;  
From whence no maze, though e’er so tangled, lends  
A clue to guide the wretch to early friends ;

But all is foul, polluted, and obscure,  
Where vice presides triumphant and secure.

Hers was a bitter tale; as day by day  
Rubbed off the gloss of shame, and virtue's ray  
In distance beam'd its last. Then sordid pelf  
Gilded her dreams, and bought her from herself!  
'Till sin required no veil to hide its blush,  
And proffered gold sufficed alone to crush  
The dying cherub Modesty. But yet  
The angel lingered! she could not forget  
Amid her lawless revels, hours of bliss,  
When on her guileless lips a mother's kiss  
In holy love was press'd. A father's smile  
Haunted her calmer thoughts:—yet now so vile,  
So ruined, and so lost! a blot of shame  
On nature's brow, disgracing woman's name!—  
Oh! could she but return to them once more,  
Though through the fire her path, she'd wade it  
o'er,  
Toil, beg!—but no!—alas! the pale was past,  
Twixt her and hope there lay a void so vast  
That Heav'n and Hell were nearer. Every eye  
Scowled darkly on her as it pass'd her by;

And e'en her childhood's playmates turned to flee  
As though she bore the Plague or Leprosy.

Then would she weep, until the taunting sneers  
Of others, deeper sunk, would mock her ears ;  
Whose squalid hands embraced the foaming bowl  
That cripples health, and helps to damn the soul.  
She too must share their pledge, although her heart  
Revolted at the deed; but cast apart  
From chaste society, and blent with them,  
*She feared to murmur,—dared not to condemn ;*  
'Till headlong hurried by the lash of fate,  
Each sin engendering sin, she learned of late  
To share their midnight orgies, and deride  
The feeling first she cherish'd—modest pride.

And thus she lived, till in her path she found  
The drooping Elsie, fainting on the ground  
'Mid gaping idlers, reft of every sense,  
Like statue carved of injured innocence.  
Oh ! then the woman wak'd within her breast  
And gentle Pity deigned to be her guest.—  
A secret something whispered “ She is pure,  
Save her from guilt, let not its gauds allure



That sinless soul to death,—bear her away,  
A mightier power hereafter will repay  
Thy soul for Charity." And from that hour  
She watch'd with jealous care that stricken flower,  
Through tedious weeks, as though her hopes of  
Heav'n

Were all in her. Yet could she be forgiv'n ?  
She felt she could—e'en the infected air  
Seem'd pure to her—an angel lingered there !  
Whose simple blessing when she raised her first,  
Shed balsam o'er her soul ; although accurst,  
That curse was lighter now ; and when she raised  
The sufferer's burning head, she knew she gazed  
On one, whose prayers were holy as the song  
Which choiring seraphim for aye prolong !  
Prayers that, in hovering round God's sacred throne,  
Might draw on her a heavenly benison.

She dared not sin with Elsie by her side.  
And thus her store was bartered to provide  
Each comfort for her friend. She told her all !  
E'en the temptation to renew her fall,  
And of her impious prayer. God help the poor  
Abandoned ones ! oft driven to endure,

Crimes loathsome to themselves, to bribe the  
foe  
Of Nature—Hunger—to withhold his blow !  
God help them !—MAN WILL NOT !—Poor Mary's  
heart  
Throbb'd wildly in her breast. Gladly she'd  
part,  
E'en with her life, to make that chamber gay,  
Where all she loved so fondly, helpless lay.

Chilly that room, and dark ; without, the blast  
Of winter howled malignant ; as it past,  
It spread a snowy mantle o'er the ground,  
And pendant set its icicles around,  
Stamping the waters with a crystal seal !  
Whilst o'er the sleeping city, peal on peal  
Of thunder loudly boomed. The lightnings glare  
That chamber lit aspace !—and twining there  
In mutual bereavement, wept and pray'd,  
Those sisters in adversity ; array'd  
In sorrow's guise, like pale, dew-spangled flowers,  
Or marble statues, touched by partial showers.  
And when pale Morning oped her sickly charms,  
She kiss'd them, slumbering in each other's arms.



Still on the current flow'd—and days began  
To lengthen their existence, span by span.  
The pregnant landscapes started into life ;  
The lowly shrubs, the stately trees, were rife  
With teeming embryo. Upon the wing  
Birds once again blithe welcome sang to Spring,  
And Nature seem'd in infancy.—What though  
The eyes of morning wept, and the bright glow  
Of the red sun at times through mist was seen,  
Yet were rude tempests caged—pure and serene  
The atmosphere, unclouded the blue sky,  
All things seem'd formed to live—and none to die ;  
Whilst like a sparkling ball through space profound,  
Our earth 'mid flaming worlds sped round and round,  
Still bless'd with virtue, still debased by crime,  
The charnel-house of Death—the toy of Time.

The old man lived in solitude, apart  
From all the outer world ; his sinking heart  
Pined for the absent one ! She was to him,  
What to the miser is his gold ! his dim  
And fading eyes would ponder on the page  
Her trembling hand had traced ! Oh, tyrant age,

But for thy palsied grasp, no earthly power  
Should hold his Elsie from his breast an hour !  
Yet though that comfort was denied, 'twas bliss  
To hear from her betimes—to read and kiss  
The missives sent by her—to know he shared  
A portion of her love !—love unimpaired,  
E'en by misfortune's blow—love undefiled,  
As when she sported there, an artless child !  
Hung round his neck, and prattled in his ear,  
A language unadorned, heartfelt, sincere.

All things seem'd lacking her ; the cottage door  
As in its former Spring was garnish'd o'er  
With clambering woodbine ; but no longer trained  
To weave in graceful wreathes, it daily waned.  
Its youthful tendrils lack'd a fosterer's care,  
And seem'd to mourn that Elsie was not there.  
The garden smiled no more ; weeds sprang apace  
And with despotic sway, usurped the place  
Of fragrant Jessamine. The favoured spot,  
Where the Sweet William, the Forget-me-Not,  
The varied Tulip, and luxuriant Rose,  
Used each in turn its fragrant sweets disclose,



Was overrun with brier, and seem'd to say,  
“ It could not bloom whilst Elsie was away.”

At last that cottage lost its only guest,  
The good old pastor ; for within his breast  
A heart of love yearned fondly for his child.  
He could not live without her. Hope beguiled  
His tottering limbs to brave the weary road,  
And lure the wanderer to his own abode ;  
Feast on her altered form his longing eye,  
Then lay his head upon her breast—and die.

Why had she not returned ? did she forego  
A rural home for the vain pomp and show  
That noisy cities boast ? Where were the ties  
In which the holy germ of kindred lies ?  
Had they been crush'd or rent ? Could aught dis-  
sever  
Links that should last through life, yea last for  
ever,  
When souls are reunited ; where at rest  
Earth's weary pilgrims harbour with the blest ?  
Why was the old man lone ? There was a cause,  
And that was Sympathy, which mildly draws

And binds congenial souls. 'Tis wise to play  
The good Samaritan. Poor Mary lay  
On the same couch, where Elsie's fevered frame  
Had writhed before—a more malignant flame  
Raged in her veins—her paroxysms were wild  
And terrible!—polluted and defiled  
Had been life's holiday with her: alive  
To dead events alone, her mind would strive  
In calmer moments, when each fit had past  
To scare the ghost of Memory, and cast  
Her hopes where Elsie pointed, at the feet  
Of Him who fill'd Heav'n's boundless mercy-seat.  
But Conscience held a mirror grimed with sin,  
Foul as the nauseous catacombs, within  
Whose subterranean womb putrescence feeds  
In loathsome horror on the life it breeds.

It was a trying task—(as phantoms sped  
In grim confusion round that sufferer's bed;  
For one so weak, unaided and alone,  
To hear through long sad nights the rending  
groan:  
The piteous cry—and see the frantic start  
That found their mutual spring in Mary's heart.)



Night's solemn tomb rose o'er its sepulchre,  
And Elsie's prayer was heard,—was heard for her  
Who had been hopeless else,—the guilty one  
Guilt's trammels felt no more : the weight was  
gone

That weighed upon her soul. Secure of bliss  
She look'd to brighter worlds,—not such as this  
Polluted earth of ours,—but worlds where sin  
Though clad in diamonds dare not enter in ;  
Yet where repentant sinners such as she,  
The Mortal change for Immortality.

Oh, glorious hope ! when man disdains to aid  
The wreck of beauty he himself has made ;  
When woman shrinks in horror and disgust  
From wretches link'd by poverty to lust ;  
Whose foundering barks *might* live, did she but  
deign

To guide the helm, and hide the early stain.  
Those souls repentant, though by them dismay'd  
May fearless call upon a mightier aid,  
And though from worms of earth their prayers are  
driven,  
Each contrite sob is registered in Heaven.

Night coiled his vestments round him as bright  
morn—

Dame Nature's midwife—told a day was born.  
How many greet the sun with anxious eyes,  
That may not see it set, or others rise :  
Yet through this world of swift and endless  
change,

The tide of life rolls on. How wild! how strange!  
Its ceaseless ebb and flow ! the smallest wave  
Flows from some cradle, ebbing at a grave,—  
Above its surface plays inconstant breath,  
And o'er it strides the grisly monster Death ;  
Still flows the tide of life ; flows to that sea,  
Where every surge lies hush'd—eternity !

That night had Mary slept, and sleeping dreamed  
That she had been in Heaven. How happy seemed  
Its denizens. She saw no sorrow there,  
But all was glory : every face was fair.  
Each angel was in robes of light array'd,  
And look'd like Elsie, when she knelt and pray'd,  
Except the tears alone. They shed no tears—  
Cause had they none—strangers were they to fears,

And cares, and griefs, like those which mother  
Earth  
In labouring pangs too often brings to birth ;  
None shunned her there, as she was shunned below,  
But each voice welcomed her, and to and fro  
She sped on golden pinions. When they sung  
She raised her voice, and wondered that her tongue  
Could utter sounds so sweet. There was no sun  
To rise and set, but from a dazzling throne  
Rich lustre streamed such rays of cloudless light  
That all was beautiful—transparent—bright.  
Shadows were there unknown ; each mirror'd face  
Flung radiance back. Oh, 'twas a happy place !  
She only wanted Elsie to complete  
Her boundless joy, so turned her shining feet  
O'er pathways paved with richer, rarer gems  
Than ever deck'd earth's kingly diadems,  
To those enchanted gates, which raise sublime  
Their golden portals o'er the tomb of Time ;  
Upon whose threshold souls from sorrow sever,  
To live and love throughout a bright " For ever."

From thence she look'd for earth ; but ah ! how far  
It seem'd from Heaven ; 'twas but a twinkling star,

The most remote and faint of those that shone  
Upon the verge of space. Whilst gazing on  
The gulf that lay between, she heard her name  
Pronounced in tones seraphic ; 'twas the same  
Soft voice that bade her hope, ere yet the clay  
That chained her soul to earth had passed away.  
She turned—'twas Elsie—in her arms a child  
As lovely as herself. Robes undefiled,  
Of spotless whiteness, o'er their limbs were cast  
By the attending angels. From the vast  
Assembly of the saints a shout was giv'n  
Of welcome, echo'd through the courts of Heav'n,  
As upwards borne on their resplendent wings  
They soared to kneel before the King of kings.  
Thrice happy dream ! she woke from sleep surprised  
To find that dream as yet unrealized.

Her soul was sad no longer. Fear had fled,  
And Mercy bade her hope : beside her bed  
Peace held her watch :—without, the streets were  
    rife  
With noisy vehicles, and bustling life.  
Beside the window Elsie sat ; *her* dreams  
Were of the bitter past : the radiant beams



Of the declining sun, danced o'er her brow  
And sported with her lips. Love's broken vow  
Had robbed them of their smiles ; her graceful form  
Bent like the rose-bud, when the wasting storm  
Has past. She looked upon the motley throng  
That big with earthly hopes careered along.  
And as she gazed in silence, thought would roam  
To scenes of childhood, to her early home,  
And him so lone, and old. The time drew near  
When she and Mary should return to cheer  
The remnant of his days, and pass their hours  
Secluded from the world : were but those powers  
Of strength recall'd to that prostrated girl,  
The cottage would regain its " Village Pearl."  
Then arm in arm, and heart with heart entwined,  
(Where 'mid the verdant meads the streamlets wind  
Their humble way : or 'neath the fragrant bowers  
Adorned by wreaths of Nature's wildest flowers ;  
Or through the woods, when clad in vernal pride,)  
They'd wander oft, and always side by side,  
Until their tender barks had reached that shore  
Where weary wanderers rest, and weep no more.  
Such were her dreams ! when with a sudden start  
That roll'd life's current back upon her heart,

She sprang upon her feet, her glance was cast  
With trembling eagerness on one that past  
Amid the throng beneath. “ Mary, ’tis he !  
”Tis Arthur, and alone !—he sees not me.”  
Swift through the door she past, breathless and  
wild  
To seek the father of her unborn child.  
Affrighted Mary call’d on her to stay,  
But Elsie heard it not : a parting ray  
Glanced on her pillow from the sinking sun,  
She closed her eyes, and sigh’d, “ God’s will be done.”

Beneath a spacious portico, upheld  
By emblems of the mighty men of old,  
Exhausted Elsie sank ; grimly they frown’d  
Upon her shrinking form ; she look’d around,  
But vainly look’d for Arthur : had that door  
By shadows darkened, closed for evermore  
On him, and Hope’s last sigh ? that way he pass’d,  
And there he must have entered ; had he cast  
One look on her,—but one,—that look had brought  
Conviction to her soul ; but rambling thought  
Will madly grasp at unsubstantial shade,  
As drowning mariners, at straws, for aid.

The clattering of a chariot struck her ear,  
And echo'd through her soul ; presaging fear  
Fettered her struggling breath ; close by her side  
It paused ; the mansion's portal opened wide  
Its massive doors, and 'neath the portico,  
*But not alone*, stood Arthur : all the glow  
Of health was on his cheek ; no trace was there  
Of sorrow or remorse. No sign of care,—  
But all was gaiety : he led the way  
For one, so lovely, that the opening day  
Might envy her her charms. "Arthur!"—he turned;  
That voice was sad; it came from one who  
mourn'd  
O'er Love's extinguished torch. The flush was gone,  
The mask of *seeming* virtue—Guilt put on  
The pallid front of fear : "Arthur," she cried,  
"Elsie has sought thee,—thy neglected bride  
Kneels suppliant at thy feet ; she does not chide,  
But asks thee for her honour, for her life.  
Forget the past, thy fond devoted wife  
Forgives thee all." Spell-bound—amazed—  
The guilty Arthur stood ; the lady gazed  
Upon his changing face : poor Elsie grasped  
Her small gloved hand, and frantically clasped

Her flowing robe. "He's mine," she shriek'd, "he's  
mine

By holy ties, both human and divine!—

Thou canst not take him from me, for within

I bear his other self; the brand of sin

Must not pollute my child—our sacred vow

Was registered on earth—in Heaven; this brow

Bears not the stamp of shame. When I am dead

He may be thine! Oh, God! my burning head

Racks at the thought; this heart ere long must

burst;

But whilst I live he's mine, he loved *me* first.

Where is thy wedded badge,—the ring? this one

Beneath the sacred fane, his hand put on.

Where! where is thine?" In eager haste she rent

The slender glove,—that simple ornament

Of circling gold fell like the deadly blight

The fabled Upas spreads, on sense and sight.

Swift to her feet she sprung in wild despair:

"Lady," shē shrieked, in maddening tones, "be-  
ware!"

There is a court above: to its decree

Either must bend—Heav'n judge 'twixt THEE and  
ME!"

She seiz'd on Arthur's arm—clung to his breast,  
When burst the guilty rage a space supprest ;  
And rudely spurned,—upon the stony floor  
Shrieking ! she fell—*the reign of Reason o'er.*

What after chanced avails not. Rugged Time  
Wings the avenger on the course of crime.  
Seek we the chamber where poor Mary lay  
Upon the eve of that eventful day.  
The silvery moon in silence sped on high,  
Climbing the concave and unclouded sky,  
And shedding through that room such mellow light  
That Day seem'd robbed of half his charms by Night ;  
A tottering old man entered. On his ear  
A laugh of horror tingled ; he drew near,  
But palsied stood, as crouching on that bed  
He saw a *Maniac* sporting with the *Dead*.

### Conclusion.

Our painful task is done. When summer came,  
The stricken Elsie was but known by name.  
Her gentle soul joined heaven's seraphic choir,  
And 'twixt her mother and her old grandsire,  
In yonder lone churchyard she lies at rest,  
A lovely infant cradled on her breast.  
But still in summer virgin fingers spread  
Festoons of flowers around her lowly bed ;  
And virgin tongues in whispers faint and mild,  
Speak of the maniac mother and her child ;  
Whilst by her simple tomb old men relate  
To listening infancy her mournful fate,  
And o'er her epitaph shed many a tear.  
Thus is it 'graved—

THE VILLAGE PEARL  
SLEEPS HERE.

Fair Elsie, who that saw thy youth dare deem  
That thou *couldst* fade ? That, like a painful dream  
On memory's waste, when years had pass'd away,  
Thy smiles would seem but shades of yesterday ;  
Thy dulcet tones, faint echos that recall  
Past music. Autumn leaves that sadly fall  
Cover thy lonely home. The Summer's sun  
Shines on the dwelling of the missing one.  
The peaceful moon still lends her borrowed light  
To deck the spangled pageantry of night.  
Rough Winter's frost, as in thy palmiest hours,  
Still binds the streams, and nips the loveliest flowers ;  
And Spring's green garlands as in mockery wave  
Above thy silent and untimely grave.

Oh Time ! faint shadow of Eternity ;  
Oh Life ! frail bark on Fate's tempestuous sea ;  
Oh Death ! grim guide to Immortality.

N O T E  
TO  
THE VILLAGE PEARL.

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THE story of the unfortunate and repentant Mary is not altogether fabulous:—there are many such in our streets: and it was from a simple anecdote related to the author by a friend, respecting one of those unfortunate souls, that the idea of introducing such a character into the Poem presented itself to his mind. All the care and attention ascribed to Mary in tending the fever-stricken Elsie was more than realized in the case of the Magdalen alluded to. Over a sister in crime she watched for weeks, denied herself all comforts, and at last not only pawned her bed, but reduced her scanty wardrobe to so low an ebb that decency might have revolted at the outrage. Her sick companion recovered; and although what follows possesses all the charms of romance, it is nevertheless true, and on the veracity of the author's informant may be justly credited. The medical gentleman who visited the patient during her protracted illness, was so much struck with the display of devotion, feeling, and heart, on the part of the attentive nurse, and so touched by her yearnings after the paths of rectitude, that he not only took an active interest in her welfare, but eventually raised her to a participation in

his name and fortune. She is now the mother of a thriving family. The facts are known but to few ; whilst her modest and amiable demeanour endears her to all. Oh, scorn her not ! breathe lightly over the bier of her early fame ! enshroud the past in the clouds of forgetfulness ; the future is in the hands of her Maker. “ *Qui sine peccato est vestrum, primus in illam lapidem mittat.* ”

## **MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.**



## MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

## INVOCATION TO GENIUS.

HAIL, Genius ! first-born cherub of the skies,  
To thee I dedicate my simple lay ;  
Beneath thy cheering smile ideas rise,  
To guide my footsteps through thy flowery way.  
How wild thou art ! how beautiful, how gay ;  
Pensive betimes,—as alabaster pale ;  
Joyous anon in Humour's bright array,  
When rosy Mirth unfolds some blithesome tale.  
Genius, all hail !

Hail to thee ! god of heavenly Poesy,  
Of restless mind, of sweet ecstatic dreams,  
Vouchsafe awhile thy patronage to me,  
And light my song with thy inspiring beams.

Oft in the cottage, oft by murmuring streams,  
Oft in the woodland and sequestered vale,  
The poet's eye beneath thy influence gleams,  
Whilst magic Thought unfolds its boundless sail.

Genius, all hail !

Hail to thee ! bridegroom of the dewy eve,  
Where Contemplation sojourns with the soul,  
Aiding the pregnant fancy to conceive  
Thoughts beatific,—such as heavenward roll,  
Born of the earth, but spurning earth's control ;  
Upwards they soar, untrammell'd as the gale,  
Which wings its trackless way from pole to pole ;  
Fostered by thee, and swathed in Mystery's veil.

Genius, all hail !

Hail to thee ! patron of the flickering light  
Which aids the student at that silent tide,  
When Day sepultured yields to ebon Night  
Half his domain,—when all the pomp and pride  
Of busy earth with sleep lie side by side,—  
When restless Vigil, with high forehead, pale,  
And glazing eye, to watchful hours allied,  
Pores o'er some mystic tome or ancient tale.

Genius, all hail !

Hail to thee ! lord of Sciences and Arts,  
Of all ennobling that lifts man o'er men,  
One ray of thine Conception's power imparts,  
And opes the tangled theme to mental ken,  
Embodying Thought through medium of the Pen,—  
Deign to my humble muse—that else must fail—  
One cheering smile ; like fabled Phœnix then  
O'er native dross, new fledged, 'twill proudly sail.

Genius, all hail !

## THE SUICIDE.

THE orb of day, whose dazzling beams  
Glanc'd brightly o'er ten thousand streams,  
Which seemed in placid ease to glide,  
Resistless towards the parent tide,  
(Reflecting as they went their way,  
Through valley lone, or meadow gay,  
The banks, whose shaggy bosoms bound  
Their waters to a neutral ground,)  
Now swathed in robes of gorgeous light,  
Sinks slowly from the gazer's sight  
Behind the hills, whose ruddy glow  
Half disenchants the vale below  
Of beauties which a space before  
In holy calm played lightly o'er  
The verdant pastures far and near,  
Which deck our lovely hemisphere.

Romantic child of Poesy !  
That sunset was a sight for thee,

A brilliant field for Fancy's flight,  
Untrammell'd through the pure twilight,  
To regions where Idea reigns,  
And Thought his magic court maintains.  
Yes ! 'twas a scene of holy calm,  
And loveliness,—a soothing balm  
For the sick soul, whose mental eyes  
Are upward turned to Paradise.  
It seemed as though that mellow light,  
Fast darkening in the shades of night,  
Was a reflection from the wings  
Of sporting angels. Crowns of kings  
Fade in the lustre of an eve  
Like that ; the costly jewels leave  
No rays behind. But the sweet sky  
Grows lovelier as the night draws nigh.  
Mayhap 'tis in such tranquil hours  
Pure spirits seek celestial bowers,  
And as *they* enter bliss, *we're* given  
A distant, transient glimpse of heaven.

But soft ! As thick clouds intervene  
To darken that enchanting scene,

As Night in sable mantle bound  
Wraps half our slumbering world around,  
A female figure seems to glide,  
Like disembodied ghost, beside  
That peaceful rivulet, where deep  
And lone the treacherous waters sleep  
And as the moon's effulgent beams  
O'er her fair form in silvery streams  
Are cast, she seems of fairy mould,  
Or, like some fabled nymph of old ;  
Fair as primeval innocence  
She glides along. But stern suspense,  
Or burdened thought, or wild despair,  
Stamps every gesture. Harrowing care  
Wrinkles a forehead fair and high ;  
Whilst from her large, dark, lustrous eye,  
There gleams determination dire,  
Reflected from a brain on fire.

Wildly to heaven her arms she flings,  
Whilst from her breast—as though the strings  
That bound her spirit to its clod  
In sunder broke—shrieks burst, “ Oh God !

It must be so, and I must pay  
My hopes of heaven as price ! Away  
Damned thought ! I care not ! Welcome death,  
Claim me, and stay this fleeting breath.  
Chaotic future bears no stings  
Like conscience. The ghost's wanderings,  
By Stygian ports or fiery streams,  
Are superficial. Hell's extremes  
I suffer, yet cannot control  
The anguish of my poor lost soul."

She ceased—plunged in ! A murky cloud  
Pass'd o'er the moon, as though to shroud  
Her sweet face from that deed of pain ;  
The cloud swept past her, and again  
In loveliness her rays were cast,  
Where that fair sinner wandered last.

Hark ! hark ! a gurgling, stifled cry  
The drowner uttered, whilst on high  
Her arms were thrown—"Help ! help !" she  
cried,  
And echo mock'd her, as she died.

No clouds now mask the moon's sweet face  
On yonder stream, the slightest trace  
Of desperate deed has passed away.  
Softly the silvery moonbeams play  
O'er the deep waters, as they glide  
In peace above that Suicide.

## WHY LIVE WE?

WHY live we? Say, is it to spend every hour as it passes  
In seeking for pleasures, in feasting in joy and in gladness?  
In thinking on days that are past, or, in building a future  
On grounds unsubstantial and frail as are sleep's airy visions?  
Why live we? Go ask of the infant which sports in the noontide  
Beneath the broad arms of the oak, that in verdure expanding,  
Embraces each zephyr, and sings to it soft plaintive music;  
That infant will start at the query; its life is a problem,  
By Time to be solved in the Future—it rests in the Present;—  
Why live we? To bask in the sunshine; to play by the streamlet;

To cull the sweet flowers of the summer, that bloom  
in the valley.

Its soul knows no Past, for young memory on  
opening

Like buds on the trees, which before they bear  
must have blossom'd.

It lives in the Present—its Future exceeds not  
morrow

When forth it may ramble at will, and uncheck'd  
in its pastime.

Why live we? Go ask of the man who in recreation  
enjoyment

For novelty pants, having proved that excess is  
pleasure.

Who knows not what beauties are seen, when  
high in his splendour

The Sun lifts his head in the East from the horizon  
the morning.

The portals of noon must be passed, ere he descends  
from his pillow

The languor so palled which awaits upon midday  
carousals.

He looks at the Past with disgust, yet his life  
superficial,

Can only exist in caprice, for he lacks resolution.

Go ask him why live we? Yet ask, when around  
him the tapers

Unsteadily flicker; as, shamed at the length of their  
revels,

They silently sink into darkness, not leaving behind  
them

Sweet perfumes to gladden the sense, but a noxious  
effluvia.

He dares not give answer; his life, like the fast  
sinking taper,

Must fade in the flame it has cherished, it burns to  
consume him.

And when he has past from the earth, no remem-  
brance behind him

Shall call to the eyes of survivors a tear for his  
absence.

Why live we? Go ask of the Sage, who on Age's  
cold threshold

Can look on the Past with a smile, and with hope  
to the Future,

Who lived in his homestead, unknown to the wiles  
of a city,

And aided the poor and the stricken, like him of  
Samaria.

His brow bears the stamp of experience; the white  
locks that crown it,

Appear to the eyes of the thinker as signets of  
wisdom,

Each one a pure pledge of bright robes, undefiled in  
the Future.

Time stands at his back, whilst Eternity opens  
before him,

And Hope points his soul to the house that contains  
“many mansions.”

Why live we? He tells us, for Happiness, and a  
Hereafter.

This world is not ours! 'tis but for the birds of the  
forest,

The beasts of the field, and the creatures that dwell  
in the ocean.

They spring from its womb, and returning, yield up  
what it gave them.

But Man is akin to Omniscience, his soul his  
Creator's,

And only in matter and form is he less than the angels.

Why live we ? Give heed to that sage, for his life is a sermon.

Faith, Hope, have been his, and Charity, which is the greatest.

She stands by the side of the angel, that mighty recorder

Who notes if the flesh when rebellious has conquered the spirit,

And blots with her tears of sweet incense the crime from the volume.

Man's life should be such, that when dying he leave those behind him

Examples and actions which speak, when dishonoured is precept.

That as he ascends to his rest at the call "Come, ye blessed,"

Another may teach as of yore did the Prophet Elisha, Enrobed in the mantle let fall by Elijah the Tishbite.

## THE YOUNG WIDOW.

WHEN the dome of Heaven was studded  
With the sentries of the night,  
And the moon 'mid the glittering host walk'd  
forth,  
In her robes of mellow light,

When the world was wrapp'd in silence,  
And all eyes were sealed in sleep,  
Then I rose from my lone and restless couch,  
To gaze on the stars, and weep.

“ Sleep on, sweet babe, for thy mother  
Is drooping and sick at heart ;  
The ties that connected two faithful souls  
By death have been torn apart.

“ Thou canst not share in her sorrows,  
Thy loss is unknown to thee,  
For thy sire is sleeping in yon church-yard,  
'Neath the drooping cypress tree.”

I strove to look at the Future;  
But darkness loomed between,  
And Grief in her mournful sable robes,  
Let the Past alone be seen.

I sobbed till my bursting bosom  
Like my brain seem'd warp'd and wild,  
And I turned from the sparkling face of Heaven  
To weep o'er my orphan child.

Ah ! when the billows of anguish  
Untrammel'd around us roll,  
And no dove returns with the olive branch  
To comfort the drooping soul.

When no rays of Hope flit o'er us  
Like angels in Jacob's dream,  
Then little we reck for our shattered barks,  
Uncheck'd they may brave the stream.

But whilst I wept o'er my infant,  
He smiled in his sinless rest ;  
Oh ! he was the dove with the olive branch,  
I clasped them both to my breast.

And as I through faith looked upwards,  
Grief ended where peace begun ;  
So Night on his pinions of dusky clouds  
Shrinks back from the rising Sun.

## CHARITY.

**SWEET !**

As the breath of Heav'n  
 That kisses verdant meads,  
 When Nature robes prolific earth  
     In Spring's green mantle,  
 Embroidered o'er and o'er with perfumed flowers  
     Of loveliest hues,  
     Is Charity.

**Pure !**

As the sinless smile  
 Decking an infant's face,  
 When pillow'd on the anxious breast  
     Of a young mother ;  
 It draws the sympathetic liquid forth  
     That cherishes,  
     Is Charity.

Prized !

By the Great I AM !

Above all idle forms,

Above all grievous abstinence,

Or saintlike precept.

Above all gifts which make the givers *seem*

As good and holy,

Is Charity.

Meek !

As the Lamb of God,

The co-eternal Son,

The Trinity in Unity,

Yet man of sorrows ;

Who laid aside his Godhead, and expired

That we might live,

Is Charity.

Sins !

It will wipe away ;

It suffers, it endures ;

It knows not guile nor flattery :

To do to others

As we would wish, that they to us might do,  
*Yet hide the deed,*  
Is Charity.

Hope !  
Is the handmaiden,  
Religion is the friend,  
The sick, the needy, and the poor,  
Are the recipients.  
The Omnipresent is the great first cause.  
And Heav'n the home  
Of Charity.

## A SMILE.

WHEN thunder-clouds sweep 'neath a midsummer's  
sky,

And lightnings give place to the bow's varied form,  
How genial the sunbeams that glance from on high,  
How brighter they seem struggling forth through  
the storm.

E'en so when the spirit by sorrow opprest,  
Is freed from its fetters so galling and vile,  
Joy's glances break forth o'er the face from the breast;

In a smile—In a smile.

And if as we sail on the ocean of Time  
Our barques are too frail for the surges that roll,  
Should waves that swell round us be fearful to climb,  
And wild tempests howl o'er each fear-stricken soul,  
Pray we in that hour of dread anguish to Heaven,  
For fiery-eyed vengeance to blast us the while ?  
No, no ; we implore that its aid may be given,  
And its smile, and its smile.

And when by a sigh, or sweet syren-like song,  
Our hearts are emeshed in love's flower-tangled maze ;  
When glances make captives, but pant to prolong  
The thraldom they seek for, till ended their days.  
The sweet ones who lull all life's sorrows to rest,  
Seek not with vain threats our poor souls to beguile,  
But soothe us whilst pillow'd in peace on the breast  
With a smile, with a smile.

And when years have passed, and life's troubles are  
o'er,  
When pleasures of earth cease to rapture and charm,  
When Hope beckons fondly to that distant shore  
Where Peace is eternized, and freed from alarm ;  
The soul bounding upwards from fetters of earth,  
From all that can trammel, from all can defile,  
Leaves on the cold corse, as it bursts to new birth,  
A sweet smile, a sweet smile.

## THE MOURNERS.

A RETROSPECTIVE GLANCE AT THE EXHIBITION OF 1851.

*To the designer of the group bearing the name of "The Mourners," these few lines are admiringly inscribed.*

HAIL to thee, Crystal Hall, all hail !

Within thy magic pile,

I've roamed enraptured and amazed

Through transept, nave, and aisle,

Where everything wore novelty,

And every face—a smile.

Beneath thy roof of sparkling glass

I've passed from place to place,

And marked the wild expressive eye

Of India's swarthy race ;

Then gaz'd with pride upon the charms

That deck an English face.

I've stood amazed 'mid sculptured forms

That lack'd but life alone :

The chisel'd marbles almost seem'd  
Substantial flesh and bone,  
Or human beings petrified,  
Their dust transformed to stone.

I've listened to the mighty swell  
That from thy organs pealed ;  
I've seen the weapons rudely formed  
Which savage warriors wield ;  
I've, wondering, viewed those brazen guns,  
The thunderers of the field.

I've stood refreshed beside the jets  
Thy perfumed fountains cast ;  
I've seen the wire-caged Koh-i-noor  
In value deemed so vast ;  
And felt a thrill of awe as by  
Thy Amazon I past.

The lovely slave of Greece that stood  
Desponding and enchained,  
Called up a sigh of bitterness—  
Her Greece no more remained ;  
For o'er its ruins Ichabod  
Is writ in lines blood-stained.

The Roman father who preserved  
The virtue of his child,  
By offering her a sacrifice  
Untouched and undefiled ;  
Though lifeless marble, from my eyes  
A wandering tear beguiled.

All things possessed a charm for me,  
From works of simplest mould  
To those surprising textures wrought  
In sunny climes with gold—  
From petty things of meanest worth  
To those of price untold.

But hast thou, gentle reader, paused  
And held thy breath a space,  
Beside a simple group which held  
An unassuming place ?  
If so ! warm tributary tears  
Have surely decked thy face.

'Tis called "The Mourners," and the tale  
Is by itself conveyed ;

It casts o'er sympathetic souls  
A sad yet pleasing shade,  
Like that a summer twilight yields  
When day's warm glories fade.

A warrior leaves his lovely bride,  
His home, where comfort reigns,  
And on his fiery charger speeds  
To battle's loathsome plains :  
Braving in Freedom's sacred cause  
Captivity and chains.

With vizor down, and corslet braced  
With ready lance in rest,  
He charges where the foemen plant  
Their bravest and their best.  
They meet—a crash—he reels—he falls—  
A spear has pierced his breast.

With daylight ends the doubtful fray,  
And on that bloody field  
A female bends o'er many a form  
Whose eyes in death are sealed ;  
Trembling she seeks the knight who bore  
An eagle on his shield.

A cry, that scared the prowling wolf  
And vulture from their prey,  
Burst from her breast ; beneath her feet  
A mail-clad warrior lay ;  
His heart for aye had ceased to beat,  
And flesh had turned to clay.

Swiftly his vizor she unclosed,  
Wildly she shrieked his name ;  
Her bosom writhed in agony,  
Her brain was all in flame.  
Wildly she raved, yet could not weep,  
She called—no answer came.

All that she loved on earth lay there—  
She raised his heavy head :  
She kiss'd his cold and clammy lips,  
But ah ! the soul had fled.  
A broken shield and splintered lance  
Lay close beside the dead.

With noiseless step that fiery steed  
Strode o'er his rider's form ;

He seemed to think on days when both  
Had braved Death's deadliest storm :  
O'er the young widow's cheek his breath  
A space played mild and warm.

On the dead warrior's face, a tear  
Startled the tearless bride ;  
She had not wept, aghast she turned,  
The steed was by her side :  
As neighing low he seemed to say,  
“Would that I too had died.”

Ah ! then and there the pent-up floods  
In peace no longer slept,  
She clasped the noble charger's head,  
Close to her cheek it crept,  
And o'er the fallen warrior knight  
In unison they wept.

Say, hast thou seen that touching group ?  
The face of lone despair ?  
The silent dead ?—The matchless beast ?  
The tears those sorrowers share ?  
If so ! *The widow and the steed*  
*Were not sole mourners there.*

**ALL THAT LIVE MUST DIE.**

LIFE is the brittle thread  
To which man clings ;  
Above his fated head  
Time flaps his wings.  
'Neath him the grave appals,  
Opening its breast ;  
Fate cuts the thread—*he* falls,  
• “ *Mortuus est.*”

Where are those men of might  
Sacred in story ;  
Victors in deadly fight,  
Victims of glory.  
Shall they no more oppose  
Fierce front to front ?  
No, they're no longer foes,  
“ *Mortui sunt.*”

Where is each Patriarch ?  
Where those before 'em ?

Gone to the lonely, dark  
Grave, that closed o'er 'em.  
The cold and loathsome tomb  
Welcomes each guest,  
O'er it the daisies bloom.  
“*Mortuus est.*”

Where art thou, honoured friend ?  
Emblem of truth ;  
Thine an untimely end,  
Snatched off in youth.  
Age weakened not thy frame,  
Dimm'd not thy gaze.  
Now we have but thy name,  
“*Mortuus es.*”

Reader, yon sun shall glow  
When to earth's trust  
Our friends shall lay us low,  
Dust unto dust.  
No more they'll wish us nigh,  
As was their wont ;  
But o'er our graves they'll sigh  
“*Mortui sunt.*”

## A FRAGMENT.

THE golden lustre of a summer sky,  
By eve's soft zephyrs chastened and subdued,  
Shed o'er the vale a mellow brilliancy—  
A holy calm—inviting solitude,—  
A spell o'er which nought worldly might intrude ;  
Glorious as that which ere man's fall was given  
To gild a Paradise. The arch-fiend view'd  
The sinless bower, and, as through chaos driven,  
Envied our earth—it seemed so like to Heaven.

And if aught heavenly bears terrestrial mould,  
'Tis scene like this ;—o'erhead a roof of gold  
In azure veiled, lest man's aspiring eye  
Should lose its virtue, through the brilliancy  
Which angels bathe in, and which God unfurled  
Like flag of glory o'er a wondering world.

The village church, half hid by stately trees,  
In solemn chime gave to the evening breeze

Its bells' deep tones, which seem'd to say to man—  
“ When Life commenced, the reign of Death began.”  
The spire—on which the sun's resplendent rays  
Were cast obliquely, towering in the blaze  
Of dazzling light—look'd upward to the skies,  
Pointing to man, the path to Paradise.

Beyond the church the little village rests,  
Like cradled innocence, between the breasts  
Of two huge hills. One is with verdure crowned,  
Whilst bleating sheep browse peacefully around  
Its fertile base. The fellow-hill retains  
Time's seal, and bears a fortress's remains,  
Though ages must successively have past  
Since war's red standard there had braved the blast,  
So wreck'd each parapet and bastioned wall—  
So grim the ruin Time had stamped on all.  
One only tower remained in crumbling pride,  
With ivy clambering round its smutted side,  
To tell the story of the Past and say,  
“ Men raised me thus ; I stand ! but where are  
they ?  
They fell as I, and all that's earthly must—  
Men are my kindred—for we both are dust.”

Towards the churchyard, a traveller's steps were bent;

Youth to his limbs unwonted vigour lent;

Health in his cheeks seemed dress'd for holiday—

Around his lips good nature loved to play.

An upright heart was mirror'd in his eyes—

His brow was such as Heaven might give the wise.

A dauntless spirit seemed to guard the whole,

And stamp "one" man with purity of soul.

Upon a mound, within the churchyard walls,

He sat and thought, and let wild fancy rove

In retrospect, whilst memory recalls

Past time when Pleasure walked abreast with Love.

Years had their tribute to dark chaos paid,

Though few those years, since near that very spot

A mutual pledge of faithful love was made—

A pledge by him long cherished—ne'er forgot.

He thought on glory, and on trophies gained

In fields o'er which the demon warrior reigned—

Thought on that love, long nurtured in his breast—

A holy love, a cherished, friendly guest—

Thought on the heart that soon should leap for  
joy—

The maiden heart that loved him when a boy ;  
Conjured a Future from the buried Past,  
And bless'd his God—he saw his home at last.

Amid the tombs, a candidate for Death,  
An aged man had set him down for breath.  
Years had made sport of him, and on his head  
The frosts of fourscore winters had been shed.  
He rose and tottered towards the rustic stile,  
Saw the young stranger, and suppressed a smile.  
“ Ah ! ah !” sighed he, as he unheeded past  
The youth, whose eyes were on some vision cast,  
“ Thou like the tenants of this lonely place  
Must yet be earthed—for Death directs the chase.”  
He paused, and groaned. The young man’s reverie  
That moment ceased, as his dark lustrous eye  
Fell on a form whose haggard aspect told  
The tale that youth should tell, had youth been  
old.

The young man rose, and through his healthy veins  
The warm blood coursed less freely ; for his mind,

Awe-struck, shrank backward from the sad remains  
Which harrowing care a space had left behind.  
Yet seemed the totterer thoughtful and resigned,  
Anticipating Death, by lingering there  
'Midst the green hillocks, whilst the wooing wind  
Kiss'd the fresh grass, and fann'd the hoary hair  
That fringed a head which sorrow rendered bare.

The traveller paused—the old man knew him not ;  
But gazed upon him as on one forgot.  
Changed were they both, since each had other known ;  
The young more strong, the old more weak had  
grown—  
One saw what he *had been* in days long gone,  
And one what he *must be* if life steals on.

He spoke and asked the aged man for those  
About whose welfare petty doubts arose ;  
Then blushed—the soldier blushed—as on his tongue  
The name of her his soul loved picturing hung.  
His foot was resting on the grassy mound,  
His eyes half childishly had sought the ground,  
As he inquired—though without seeming care—  
“ If she had grown less faithful or less fair.”

The old man's eye with sudden lustre beamed,  
Whilst o'er his face a ray of sunset streamed.  
He gasped for breath, as though some secret prest  
Like fearful nightmare on a dreamer's breast !  
Then changed his features to a shade of gloom  
Befitting one long plighted to the tomb,  
As pointing downwards, in deep tones he said—  
“ Thy foot, rash youth, profanes her hallowed bed.”

As loosened avalanche, from glacier freed,  
Rolls to the base with overwhelming speed,  
Engulfing all in one huge snowy wave,  
So dropp'd the stranger on the new-made grave ;  
Crush'd in that fall lay every cherish'd pride,  
Each ardent hope—all, all, that moment died.  
E'en recollection for a period slept,  
As on the grave he laid his face and wept.

Eve passed away—the summer sun had set,  
Night's spangled robe wrapped half our world  
around ;  
Still was the grass upon that green grave wet  
With tears from him whose body press'd the ground.  
The old man disappeared ; but still spell-bound

The stricken stranger linger'd in the gloom,—  
The churchyard gloom, through which his groans  
resound ;  
Fate's signet stamped despondency-his doom,  
For hope was sepultur'd in love's cold tomb.



## DEATH.

Is that death ?

No ! for agony sports with each limb ;

The eyelids are raised, but the eyeballs are dim ;

And the breath

In a sigh seems to say,

“ Life is passing away,

From that wreck of mortality blending with clay.”

Yet life lingers,

And clings to its fortress, though crumbling with  
dust ;

Sweet hope has ta'en wing,

For her voice had no charm for that fate-stricken  
thing.

Through the strong walls of health, life's ally, has  
been thrust

The conqueror's sting ;

Whilst his fingers

Press tightly and sure on the crushed yielding heart,  
And force that deep groan,—ha ! his envenomed dart

Strikes the ties

That link with the body the God-breathed soul ;  
It flutters—'tis freed ! and defies his control.

Through the skies

Swift it speeds, as the last links dissever,  
No more to be trammelled, for ever and ever;  
The casket that held it may mingle with dust,  
But the diamond it kept for a time in its trust,

Never dies ;

And the clod,

Within which had fluttered the soul since its birth,  
Now tendered meet compound of earth unto earth,

To its God

Has resigned

Humanity's essence ! the magic of mind !

The storehouse of memory ! thought unconfined !

The embryo angel that freed from its shrouds,

Wings its flight from dull earth o'er air's vapoury  
clouds,

To its rest,

In that heaven of glory where pain is unknown,  
To join in the chorus that swells round God's throne,  
From the blest.

## THE WATERY GRAVE.

SHE stood, amid the breakers, on a rock,  
Whose shaggy front, with sea-weed overgrown,  
Had braved the fury of past centuries,  
And raised its ponderous head in awful pride  
Above the white foam, that around its base  
Seem'd boiling madly in convulsive wrath.  
O'er her fair form the vengeful waters cast  
Thick showers of spray, and drenched the scanty  
robe  
Which formed sole covering for the seaman's wife.

Upon her breast—whose agony alone  
Bore semblance to the turmoil of the deep—  
A slumbering babe, unconscious of the pangs  
That raged within, with placid smile reposed.  
Fiercely and loud the wild tornado raged,  
Whilst closer to her breast the mother's arm  
Clasped that young likeness of her absent spouse,  
And round its limbs her simple covering drew,  
Heedless of self, and careful but of him.



Hark ! hark ! o'erhead, in wild commotion driven,  
The surcharged clouds with rumbling sounds com-  
mence

An aerial war. The red artillery  
With dazzling glare lights up the midnight scene ;  
Flash after flash, in quick succession, breaks  
Through the black shroud that swathes the vault of  
heaven ;

Then loud, deep, terrible the thunder's war  
Drowns the fierce contest 'twixt the sea and storm ;  
Peal after peal in one continuous swell,  
Of crash and uproar, shakes the realms of space,  
As though dame Nature in her dying pangs  
Battled with coming Chaos.

Old Ocean

Rides, 'midst the turmoil, on his watery car ;  
High o'er each wave, defying Heaven, he's borne ;  
Around his head fierce lightnings sport themselves  
In wild coruscancy, showing, as 'twere,  
The hoary locks that deck his briny brow.

The storm sweeps on. Old Neptune's powerful  
arm

Now nerveless falls—he's worsted in the strife.

Still, in the pride of baffled consequence,  
His huge breast heaves ; and as the giant dies,  
One mighty struggle, ere he seeks his caves,  
He vainly makes. High, as in mockery,  
His mountain waves rise towards the restless clouds.  
A flash !—a peal, that shakes our pendent world,  
Bursts fiercely forth ; and, with an angry growl,  
That world of waters hurries towards the shore ;  
'Gainst the rude rocks its fury concentrates ;  
But foiled e'en there in elemental war,  
It breaks in spray, and to its depths recedes.

Another flash !—but fainter than before ;  
And still upon the rock the seaman's wife  
Maintains her footing,—still the child is clasp'd  
To her rack'd breast,—and still o'er that wild sea  
Her eyes with dread intensity are cast,  
As though some objects paralysed their sense  
Of vision, though through the gloom and darkness  
That shrouded all around, no human eye  
Could peer. A wail !—she starts ! a hurried crash,  
Borne on the pinions of the blast, appals  
Her senses. Another flash, of dazzling  
Brightness, spreads o'er expanse, and scarce apart

A cable's length, she sees a labouring craft ;  
High on the waves 'tis borne ; its tatter'd sails  
Tell the sad tale of tornado at sea.  
Beside the helm, with firm and sinewy arm,  
A seaman stands, and guides the storm-lash'd  
bark !  
On him her eyes, with magnet truth, are fixed,—  
On him, the father of her slumbering child.

Upon the rock she bends her naked knees,  
And breathes a prayer, not uttered, but intense.  
What cry was that? No bark before her rides !  
Forth from her breast a shriek of horror breaks—  
“ Help ! heavenly Powers ! my husband needs your  
aid ! ”

Another flash ! and towards the rocky strand  
Some substance glides ; upon it her wild eyes  
Rest, with a frenzy pen can never trace.  
Nearer it comes—it is her husband's corse !  
With fearful energy the widow's hand  
Grasps at the fragment Death had left behind.  
But where ! Oh where ! is Pity's angel face ?  
Where Mercy's smile, to stay the stroke of Fate !

The same dark wave that bore him to her feet  
O'erwhelms herself in that her hour of woe.  
She clasps him—sinks—the startled infant's cries  
In puny clamours pierce the midnight air ;  
A moment more ! a gurgling groan is hush'd  
In the loud turmoil of the hissing surge !  
Husband, wife, child, alike have shared one fate,—  
Their grave the Ocean, and their dirge the Storm !

## THE PLEASURE OF PLEASING.

IF man's chequered life contains one single pleasure,  
 Which memory fondles and guards as a treasure,  
 As stainless as honour, as thrilling as glory,  
 As sacred as truth on the tablets of story ;  
 Whose motives are pure,  
 As an infant's prayer ;  
 As chaste as the heaven  
 Which cherubim share ;  
 As guileless as love  
 Nursed in Eden's bowers ;  
 Sweet as the perfume  
 Of blossoming flowers ;  
 As fruitful as mercy poured out without measure,  
 "The pleasure of pleasing," that must be the pleasure.

"The pleasure of pleasing" to men void of feeling  
 And mind is a stranger. No sweet smiles revealing

The heart's joyous throbings ; no rapturous beaming  
Of eyes that but mirror the soul. As though  
streaming

Through each restless orb  
The spirit's fire blends  
In harmony sweet  
With congenial friends ;  
Like galvanic wires  
Connecting true hearts,  
That glance of delight  
Heaven's foretaste imparts.

Then grant us, ye gods ! the blest virtue of seizing  
That pastime of angels, " The pleasure of pleasing."



## THE DYING MOTHER.

(A TALE OF THE LATE FAMINE IN IRELAND.)

THE night had been cold, but the morning was  
colder,

And dark murky clouds veiled our Isle from  
the sun,

The snow in its white chilling shroud had enroll'd  
her,

And daylight shed tears for what darkness had  
done.

Bleak Winter's harsh fetters had crippled creation,  
The night stalking blight had destroyed vegeta-  
tion,

Starvation's gaunt cheeks ghastly smiled at our  
nation,

And Hope from the poor Irish peasant had flown.

Within a clay cabin, unsheltered and cheerless,  
Whose crumbling mud wall had been rent by the  
gale,

On a damp heap of rushes, low moaning, but tearless,  
Lay mother and infant, both haggard and pale.  
The rain through the broken thatch'd roof had descended,  
The walls from the fierce winds no longer defended  
That shivering wretch ; but her woes were nigh ended,  
For Famine had stricken poor Mary O'Neale.

Beside her, three children were helplessly crying,  
Their calls to their mother were piteous for food.  
Alas ! that poor mother from hunger lay dying,  
And vainly to her for assistance they sued.  
Her dim eyes scarce saw their wan features before  
her,  
At each piercing shriek a cold shudder pass'd o'er her,  
She felt not the gnawings that inwardly tore her ;  
The mother's heart bled for her young starving brood.

The infant she held to her breast breathed no longer,  
Its spirit had flown from its clod to the sky ;

But the mother's hand press'd to her bosom the  
stronger,  
The cold dust remaining. Embracing they lie,  
The *dead* and the *dying*. Ah ! sad that caressing,  
The *still throbbing* heart to the *stilled one* was pressing,  
And breathing on those she must leave, a fond bless-  
ing,  
The mother's soul sought her young infant on high.

## ODE TO THE OLD YEAR.

(LAST DAY.)

THOU art aged, and helpless, and weak,  
 Poor Old Year !

Time's furrows are deep in thy cheek,  
 Poor Old Year !

Harsh Winter's chill hand brought thee forth to the  
 day,

Spring deck'd thy fresh youth in its bridal array,  
 And Summer's soft voice bade thy manhood be gay,  
 Poor Old Year !

Yes; then we were happy, and thou in thy prime,  
 Poor Old Year !

But, ah ! we ne'er marked the swift progress of  
 Time,  
 Poor Old Year !

The keen winds of Autumn beat hard on thy head,  
 Like leaves of the forest thy dark locks were shed,  
 And thine age sought on Winter's cold threshold a  
 bed,

Poor Old Year !

Now thy old head is bald, and thine eyes are grown  
dim,

Poor Old Year !

Thy staff aids no longer each paralyzed limb,

Poor Old Year !

The revels of Christmas have won thy *last* smile,  
Earth's pleasures now fail thy lone hours to beguile,  
And thy painful respirings can last but awhile !

Poor Old Year !

How my heart bleeds to see thee, so helpless and wan,

Poor Old Year !

I weep when I think on those days that are gone,

Poor Old Year !

But Death knows no pity, he rests not his wing,  
He heeds not the beggar, he spares not the king,  
And this midnight's dull chime must thy requiem  
sing,

Poor Old Year !

Ere yet thou hast left us, a moment we'll spend,

Poor Old Year !

In viewing the past from thy birth to thy end,

Poor Old Year !

Let mem'ry hold forth Banquo's mystical glass,  
On which the mind's eye meets the shadows that  
pass ;

There we'll gaze for awhile on the phantasm  
mass,

Poor Old Year !

Repine not for parting with grim father Time,

Poor Old Year !

Those crowding the glass, were cut off in their  
prime,

Poor Old Year !

These died in their childhood, and those died like  
thee,

*This host fell by slaughter, that perished at sea,*  
And Death may this moment be calling e'en me,

Poor Old Year !

Thou'st seen them all living, and seen them all  
dead,

Poor Old Year !

Each moment the charnel-house smoothens a bed,

Poor Old Year !

Each pulse of our heart is the funeral knell  
Of some soul that's summoned to heav'n or to hell,  
And this night *we* part too—Farewell, oh Fare-  
well—

Poor Old Year !

## A TEAR.

As the opening flowret, with modest hue,  
Bends down 'neath the weight of the morning's dew,  
And shrinks from the kiss which the wanton breeze  
Bestoweth alike upon flowers and trees ;  
Tremblingly turning its chaste cheek away  
And anxiously waiting the dawn of day :  
So the soul of man when by sorrow bound  
Shares not in the pleasures that sport around,  
'Till some magic spell—like the sun's bright ray  
Which chaseth the dew from the flower away—  
Dispels all its gloom ; then the human eye,  
No longer desponding, is raised on high—  
And the dewdrop falls ! Oh, how priz'd ! how  
dear !  
To the burthened heart is that glistening tear.

In this vale of sin, there are tears that start  
From the scalding eyes which relieve the heart ;  
Though that heart be parched as the sandy plains,  
Where the blasting breath of the simoon reigns.

And tears there are shed by the thankful soul  
Where sorrow and anguish have no control.  
Yet holier far are the drops that flow  
In sympathy's cause for another's woe ;  
More precious than pearls, with charm sublime,  
From the damning record, each blots a crime ;  
As the gushing flood that from Horeb flowed,  
At the magic stroke of the Prophet's rod,  
Bade the droughty Jews be of better cheer—  
E'en such to the sad is sympathy's tear !

## SONG.

“ ERIN, ACUSHLA MACHREE !”

SUCCESS, charming Erin, my country, to thee !  
 May love and thy daughters aye smile on the free !  
 Thy sons, may they always in friendship agree,  
 For homes of true hearts, are the homesteads for me !  
 Thy hills and thy valleys, where oft I have roved  
 With Mary, when first I found out that I loved,  
 Still cling to remembrance, where'er I may be,  
 And bless thee, sweet “ Erin, acushla machree !”

When musing on bright hours I've spent on thy  
 plains,  
 Though sad recollection *alone* now remains,  
 I pine not in sorrow, for Hope says, “once more  
 Thou'l meet with thy lass on thine own native shore,  
 Where triple leaved shamrocks unite all their charms,  
 Like Faith, Hope, and Charity, twining their arms ;”  
 Ay ! there Hope has said, with my Mary I'll be,  
 To bless thee, sweet “ Erin, acushla machree !”

How prized then the prospect ; when hardships are  
past,  
I'll meet with my own lovely Mary at last ;  
What transports of rapture shall thrill through my  
frame,  
When she on my bosom rests,—faltering my name.  
And when her pure lips to mine fondly are prest,  
When heart answers heart in each high swelling  
breast,  
When eyes read in eyes “thine alone will I be,”  
I'll bless thee, sweet “ Erin, acushla machree.”



## AN INTRODUCTION.

*Written, at the request of a Lady, in the fly-leaf of  
her Scrap Book.*

READER AND FRIEND,

If thou canst a moment of leisure expend,  
 Where smiles are the doles I require ;  
 The scraps that adorn these pages must lend  
 The pastime thy heart may desire.  
 In turning the leaves o'er, on each thou shalt see  
 Gems,—pictures—of various designs,  
 Romantic—sublime—or grotesque they may be—  
 Where neatness with beauty combines.

Each painting with extracts is garnish'd around,  
 To ease and enliven the scene—  
 Wit shoots Folly's arrows at Wisdom profound,  
 And Poetry tingles between.  
 Here landscapes owe nothing to Nature—yet Art  
 Expects admiration the while.  
 There angels, with eyes of all shades, ask thy heart  
 To pay their sweet looks with a “smile.”

A smile ! such donation 'twere vain to deny,  
Thou canst not refuse mite so small,  
To ladies whose looks competition defy,  
Whose features are framed to enthrall ;  
'Neath brows, dark or fair, each bright orb beams  
on thee,  
To ravish thy bosom with bliss,  
Whilst lips, one and all, seem at least to agree  
In asking thine own for a "kiss."

Scan over the pages, but as each is past,  
Pray don't think of glancing at me ;  
Or blushes must surely my features o'ercast,  
For I shall be gazing at thee ;  
I'll know if thou'rt pleased, though thy features,  
perhaps,  
False traitors may prove to thy heart ;  
For if when I'm *near*, thou'l but glance at my  
scraps,  
I'm sure of thy thoughts when we *part*.

THE END.

LONDON, 142, STRAND,  
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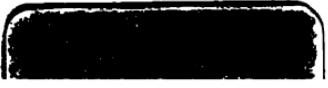
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